INDIRECT COMMUNICATION
AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

"Christianity is necessarily and always wedded to indirection."[1] This thesis represents an emerging consensus among the scholars who are studying the nature and function of "the language of the gospel." In this dissertation, I contend that a theological study of the nature and form of Christian communication must come to the same conclusion. The conclusion that true Christian communication must be indirect has a direct bearing on any practical attempts at communicating. I propose to show the practical usefulness of the notion of indirect communication by applying it to the task of Christian education.

Why is Christianity "wedded" to indirection? Because, contends Sallie McFague in Speaking in Parables, only an indirect mode of communication can generate a faith in God which is always incarnate in the historical decisions and actions of a person. That is, only indirection can bring about a Christian faith. Intellectual beliefs can be transmitted directly to the minds of people. But by themselves beliefs are incapable of transforming an individual's way of responding to the challenges of daily life. Similarly momentary religious feelings can be evoked in people without leading to an active, embodied faith. In spite of having gained some new religious knowledge or feelings, the people remain spectators of the life of faith, not participants. In contrast, the language of the gospel seeks to surprise spectators into participation.[2]

New Testament parables have been a primary object of study of those who are concerned with uncovering how Jesus and the early Church communicated the gospel. A good way of introducing the notion of indirect communication is, therefore, not to seek a precise definition of the term, but to describe how parables work in relating God's kingdom to people's lives. Sallie McFague gives a description which is worth citing at length.

> A parable is an extended metaphor--the metaphor is not in discreet images which allow for a flash of insight (a purely aesthetic or intellectual "Aha!"), but it is a way of believing and living that initially seems ordinary, yet is so dislocated and rent from its usual context that, if the parable "works," the spectators become participants, not because they want to necessarily or simply have "gotten the point" but because they have, for the moment, "lost control" or as the new hermeneuts say, "been interpreted." The secure, familiar everydayness of the story of their own lives has been torn apart; they have seen another story--the story of a mundane life like their own moving by a different "logic," and they begin to understand (not just with their heads) that another way of believing and living--another context or frame for their lives--might be a possibility for them.[3]

Parables thus seek to bring about human transformations. They want to transform the hearers' ways of believing, of looking at life, and of living. They want to make it possible for them to have faith in a loving God who upsets the logic of the familiar and provides a new context for their lives. McFague concludes, "If this is the parabolic way it is necessarily metaphoric, necessarily indirect, because it is concerned not with what we believe, know, or are, but what we are in the process of believing, knowing, and becoming in our lives."[4]

What scholars are uncovering today as the parabolic way, Luther had discovered by theological reflection to be the true form of any Christian communication over four centuries ago. According to Luther the three very basic theological concepts of "creation," "sin," and "grace" are the roots of indirection as God's way with humans. Christian communication must be indirect, first, because God approaches humans "clothed in creation" and historical reality, never as a "naked God," never as some directly perceptible divine essence, never as some knowable idea; secondly, because humans create an egocentric view of the world and an egocentric "ultimate" knowledge which competes with a faith-view, a theocentric view of life; and thirdly, because God's grace can only restore people to a relationship of faith, if it brings about a reversal of views.

The first task of this dissertation is to sketch these broad theological bases of indirect communication as we can find them in Luther's theology. Anyone interested in Christian communication can benefit from examining the dynamics which are at play when God, historical reality, and humans are regarded to be part of one communication network. Luther did not use the terms "indirection" or "indirect communication" when describing the divine-human dialogue in which created reality plays the central role. However, he clearly described the dynamics to which the terms refer.

Aside from the breadth and depth of his perception into the theological roots of "indirection," Luther is helpful to contemporary Christian communicators exactly because his theological images and jargon are unfamiliar to many and appear quaint to some. Studying his thoughts and images can liberate us from the narrow view of Christian communication that will result if we stay within the "language-games" of linguistics and language philosophy. We are becoming rather familiar with distinguishing between "allegory" and "metaphor" to indicate the difference between direct and indirect communication. The less familiar distinction between a "naked" and a "clothed" God can give us a new appreciation of the reality to which both language-games point.

The second task of this dissertation will be to show how important the notion of indirect communication is for understanding the true nature of Christian education. The concept of indirection helps us both to evaluate educational models and to redefine the aims and processes of Christian education.

Christian education as one practical discipline of Christian communication must be in the realm of indirection. On the basis of this thesis, I will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of two major models of Christian education espoused within the Religious Education Movement in North America. I chose to evaluate the educational theory of George Albert Coe, since he is the key representative of the early phase of the Religious Education Movement, and of Randolph Crump Miller, since he is the most widely read representative of the later phase of the movement, in which a new emphasis was placed on the Christian heritage and on the nature of biblical language.

Coe is attempting to overcome direct modes of religious communication in Christian education. He calls those models of education which focus on imparting intellectual beliefs to the minds of learners "transmissive education." He discovers that transmissive education does not equip learners to respond to actual social realities in a new way. Knowledge is divorced from action. To remedy this situation, Coe proposes a social theory of religious education. Religious education must be rooted in, and influence, the actual social dynamics in which people grow up. Learning to love God must be fused with the process of becoming socially minded. As we evaluate Coe's social theory of religious education, we will discover that he is unable to overcome "transmissive education," because of his idealistic claim that each individual has a direct access to God in the functioning of his mind and in the ultimate ideals the mind discovers. Coe's "God" is stripped of finite, historical reality as his clothing leaving behind the "naked God" of a social ideal. As a result human faith becomes devotion to an ideal, rather than a way of responding to daily realities as God's "clothed presence."

Miller moves beyond Coe by recognizing that the attempt to make specific ideals the object of faith will prevent learners from centering their lives in the Creator of all. Miller aims to affect the learners' relationships to the living God, who is in and beyond all historical reality, and to their fellow humans. However, in his early writings, Miller describes processes for reaching these aims that are not in the realm of indirection. The educational methods are more adequate for teaching "relevant theology" than for affecting relationships to the incarnate God. After he had been exposed to the "odd" functioning of religious language, Miller begins to propose more indirect forms of communication which seek to relate the learner, the daily world, and God to one another. However, because Miller is committed to an enriched empirical epistemology for coming to know God, he does not reflect adequately on the transformations of believing, seeing, and living that must occur, if God is to be acknowledged as one's center of meaning.

The critical evaluation of Coe's and Miller's educational models prepares us for the constructive task of pulling together the vital elements of a model of Christian education as indirect communication. Christian education must be based in the dynamics of created reality, if we believe that God is "clothed in creation." It must aim toward enabling people to respond to the challenges of daily living from the "strange" perspective of faith in a gracious Creator. It can only reach this aim, if it enables hidden transformations of perspectives to occur within the complexities of human decisions and actions in time. My brief outline of Christian education as indirect communication will hopefully convince fellow educators that we must pursue the thesis that Christian education is wedded to indirection.

PART I

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

The purpose of Part I is to sketch the theological foundations for an indirect mode of Christian communication as we can uncover them in Luther's writings. Luther does not speak of "indirection," nor of the "metaphorical nature" of biblical language. His primary focus is not on "parables" or on the "Christian story" as related to "our story." Instead Luther's jargon speaks of "God clothed in creation" and of "God clothed in the Word." This change of jargon is good for us when we try to understand the realities to which the various language-games point. For contemporary theologians and Christian educators it is easy to be caught up in the mystique of "parables" or "stories," as if by naming these names all theological problems concerning Christian communication are automatically resolved. And, I suppose, it is equally easy for Lutherans like myself to be caught up in the mystique of Luther's sixteenth Century language. To avoid both pitfalls, I will try to express Luther's insights into the nature of Christian communication in such a way that some of his major images or terms can come alive for us and a comparison and dialogue with contemporary perspectives and images can become possible.

Before I sketch the progression of thought by which I will uncover Luther's view on the nature of Christian communication and before I list the limited body of Luther's works I will use for this purpose, a few notes on some of the characteristics of Luther's writings are in order. These characteristics guide the method of our exposition of his thought.

First, we must note that Luther himself does not give a logically ordered, systematic exposition of the nature and form of Christian communication. Luther's thought emerges from comments and explicit passages found in a variety of situational contexts. Some are within the exegetical context of his biblical lectures. Others are found in the context of controverse-theological tracts, such as those dealing with the debate over the nature of the sacraments. Again others occur in the context of homiletical aids for preachers or in catechetical guides for Christian educators. The range of his writings shows that Luther is not what one traditionally considers to be a systematic theologian. Nevertheless, the inner coherence of his thought is rigorously firm. Not the situational topics discussed in these various writings, but primarily the coherence of Luther's inner dynamic of thought--which allows Luther to address such a range of topics in a distinctive way--is the best clue to Luther's understanding of Christian communication. *One element of our method of exposition will therefore be to uncover Luther's "inner systematics," his way of seeing and expressing reality*, rather than merely to compile what Luther says explicitly on the topic of communication.

Secondly, we must note the nature of Luther's language. In his writings--many of which are transcriptions by students of prepared, but spontaneous lectures--,Luther plays with language to evoke meanings or to point to ongoing events in existence. He is, in the words of Heinrich Bornkamm, a *Sprachkuenstler*, an "artist of speech." As a result, "The pure logician, for whom the unequivocal meaning of employed terms and thinking-aids is a prime axiom, must be brought to despair by Luther's language."[1] The same terms can, for Luther, convey both different and opposite meanings in differing contexts. Much of the elusiveness of Luther's language and his lack of definitions are not accidental. All the essential phenomena or subjects he is dealing with defy definition, since they are not isolated objects to be observed, but events of relationships. "God," "the world," and "man" are interrelated processes in time, as the thesis will show. Luther's language is trying to bring this interrelated process into the presence of the hearer rather than capturing it and thereby destroying its essence: movement in time. When Luther does seem to give precise definitions, he is more often than not giving a memory aid to the hearers of his lectures or a pastoral counsel to the confused or spiritually anxious, as Karin Bornkamm has shown.[2] These definitions, therefore, do not attempt to describe exhaustively what Luther has to say on a given issue or phenomenon. Thus a second methodological principle of this essay will be to systematize Luther's thought without forcing his thought into his own or our own definitions. The language of the essay will remain "playful" or descriptive to let movements of life appear.

Thirdly, we must note that Luther's writings are themselves an act of indirect Christian communication in which Luther tries to lead the readers to view life from a certain perspective and to bring about a reversal of perspectives for some. Many of Luther's formulations, therefore, function only within a particular dialogue of perspectives. If one ignores that Luther is engaged in a dialogue of perspectives, one will convert his statements into direct knowledge or into static prescriptions for life. A few examples may illustrate this. Luther, living in a society where religious orders appeared as the ideal service of God, praises the secular works that an ordinary Christian does in his vocation as "better and more acceptable to God than those superstitious and marvelous works" of "a monk or any self-righteous person."[3] Luther would be misunderstood, if read to mean that secular vocations, rather than religious vocations, automatically let one do God's will. In such a reading, Luther would have merely exchanged a religious prescription of "good works" which are pleasing to God with a secular prescription. Instead, he is challenging the whole perspective on man's relationship with God in which "good works" can be prescribed and God's good will can be earned by a measurable performance of these prescriptions. Luther's aim of juxtaposing secular to religious works as equal or better[4] is to shift the perspective from looking at the nature of the work to how the work is done. A monk can stay in his religious calling, if he performs its tasks non-egocentrically, i.e., without concern for his own salvation.[5] Similarly secular vocations let a person do God's will only when the works are done non-egocentrically, i.e., in faith and responsibility.

Similarly it is Luther as indirect communicator who formulates the idolized and misunderstood phrase "justification by faith." Luther is not prescribing a new way to gain salvation in contrast to a way characterized as "justification by works of the law." If one misreads the phrase as a prescription, "faith" would be some kind of psychological work man offers to God to please him, rather than offering him moral action. Actually Luther is addressing people who are concerned about how to justify themselves before God or others. He therefore uses the word "justification"; but at the same time he destroys its way of naming man's God-relationship by putting the word "faith" in front of it. The one word uproots the other. Thus a life in which one is "justified by faith" is a life in which one is free from the concern about justifying oneself.[6]

A third methodological principle of this essay therefore will be to give an exposition of Luther's thought which remains in the realm of indirection. I will not try to capture the network of communication between God, daily realities, and humans in precise theological concepts. Rather I will try to point to the reality of this network of communication in such a way that theologians and Christian educators can look at it from a new perspective.

The use we are making of Luther's thought in this thesis and the nature of Luther's writings guide, not only the method of exposition, but also the selection of works and the progression of thought for this first essay. Since we are concerned with Luther's inner systematics or perspective, we can discern these in a very limited body of his works. It is not only expedient to do so. Rather Gerhard Ebeling, the well-known Luther scholar, states that it is an "urgent requirement for interpreting Luther to trace the connections of thoughts into their last nuances in a clearly circumscribed body of texts."[7]

The "skeleton" and outline of this essay will follow the major progression of thought in Luther's Lectures on Genesis (1535 et seq.), chapters 1-3. These lectures are Luther's last major exposition of the changing relationships between God, historical reality, and humans. The relationships are referred to by the terms "creation," "sin," and "grace." The lectures are a valuable source of Luther's thought, if one reads them with an alert for redactorial additions and changes from other minds and if one verifies one's readings with undisputed works of Luther.[8] The particular usefulness of the first three chapters comes from the fact that Luther not only gives us an imagistic philosophic terminology for describing the network of relationships but also provides us with a paradigm of this network in the changing relationships between God and Adam.

The paradigm shows us that created and historical reality is God's address to Adam. Adam, however, can only "hear" the address when it is mediated to him by the intentional communication of "the Word." By trusting "the Word," Adam gains a faith perspective on life. He is enabled to see, and respond to, the challenges of daily life as the mandates of a gracious God. His faith is embodied in his life of responding to created, historical realities.

Following the pattern of this paradigm, our first chapter will sketch the "perspective of faith." To describe this perspective and how it comes about, we must first (A.) describe "Historical Existence as Divine Address and as Human Response" and secondly (B.) describe "Intentional Communication."

The paradigm continues by showing the changed perspective that comes about by Adam's "Fall" out of a trust-relationship with God. Adam now feels that he has moved beyond the sight of faith to a direct knowledge of God's will. Chapter two of this essay will therefore describe the "perspective of sin."

Finally the paradigm describes how God's grace seeks to restore Adam to the perspective of faith. Luther here sketches the intricate dynamic of his--famous and frequently misunderstood--"law-gospel dialectic" by means of which sin's view of life is reversed. Thus chapter three must deal with "the communication of reversal."

In order to "flesh in" this "skeleton" from Lectures on Genesis, I will use Luther's major treatises on the Lord's Supper of 1526, 1527, and 1528 (Luther's Works, vols. 36 and 37). Here we find a clear statement on historical existence (i.e., "creation") as God's address and on the need for Word and Sacrament as intentional communication of God's presence. These same two themes are expressed in different language in the "Kirchenpostille" (1522) on John 1:1-14. For the theme of the "human response" to God's address, I will use Luther's own attempt at communicating the Decalogue as a call to faith and obedience which we find in "The Large Catechism" (1529) and in "The Treatise on Good Works" (1520). For the themes of the perspective of sin and the communication of reversal, I will turn to Luther's Lectures on Galatians (1535), which contain his fullest and most mature treatment of these themes. Although each of these writings gives particular attention to one or several dimensions of Luther's model of the divine-human dialogue, they will all be used throughout, since each writing also embodies the whole model.

CHAPTER I

THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAITH

A. Historical Existence as Divine Address and as Human Response

1. A Theological View of Existence

The biblical word for naming historical existence as the central agent in the communication between God and humans is "creation." Direct observation will not reveal to us that the world of existing realities is "creation." To look on life as creation requires a certain perspective. It is the distinctive view which Jews and Christians have of existence in time--in contrast, e.g., to the Hindu's view of worldly realities as "maya" or illusion.

Luther is conscious of the fact that the writers of the Bible are using a "view," a "mode of procedure," and a "technical language" that is theological. He wants his own observations and statements to be understood as part of this theological language-game, so that his readers or hearers will understand from what standpoint he is approaching his study of human life. The view, method and language appropriate to one's profession is necessarily different from that of other professions and scholarly disciplines. Each mode or view will attend to different aspects, even if the objects of attention are the same existent realities. The findings of the different professions are not invalidated by the fact that what appears from each view will be different. Thus it is a rule of thumb for Luther that "no science (i.e., scholarly discipline) should stand in the way of another science, but each should continue to have its own mode of procedure and its own terms."[1]

With this rule of thumb, Luther is affirming the validity of multiple ways of looking at existence given by one's professional purpose. He is at the same time warning the different disciplines to notice the limits of what they can see, so that they do not think they have a comprehensive view of the world. This distinction serves Luther to endorse the findings of what we would call the natural scientists and of those who view existent realities as entities in themselves and in their causal interconnections. At the same time, he can alert us that the basis of religion and morality does not appear from that approach.

The strength and limit of those disciplines which study existent realities as isolated objects or in causal connections is that they can only attend to the "material and formal causes" of things--as Luther says (in the language-system of Aristotelean causes which was so pervasive at his time).[2] They study the immanent materials from which a thing springs into being and the immanent forms that determine the patterned unfolding or development of a being.[3] In these matters they become the acknowledged experts. The Bible or theology has no revealed insights into these matters which would make research superfluous. Thus if one wants accurate information of such things as, e.g., the sun, the moon, and the stars and the interrelation of their respective lights, "the astronomers are the experts from whom it is most convenient to get what may be discussed about these matters."[4]

If such a view were taken as a comprehensive view of existence--which was the danger in Luther's time where the causal thought categories were being employed to attempt to express theological concepts--, the natural and social world would be a purely causal mechanism. The view of the world would be deterministic--and there would be no place for moral responsibility or history. The world and its creatures, including man, would not necessarily be static or completed in its final stage of development. But they would be finished in nuce, waiting only for the process of possibly slow and halting, but inexorable unfolding. "God" would not be a term to express a significant dimension of existence. He would, if used at all, be a mere first cause who has started this process beyond his control. To fend off such a mixture of thought categories from one realm into another, Luther says, "It is not true . . . that God created everything in the beginning, and then let nature take its own independent course, so that all things now spring into being of their own power; thereby they put God on a level with a shoemaker or tailor."[5] Where existence takes its independent course, having all its vital principles of unfolding within itself, "matter and form" would "become eternal," i.e., they would exhaustively define what the world can become.[6] The purpose of the world would be to fulfill its "form." Similarly the purpose or function of man in the scheme of existence would be to unfold his natural endowments. His purpose would be defined by a view of the individual as an isolated entity. Again, the moral, let alone the religious, has no significant contribution to the fulfillment of this purpose.

To bring about a dialogue with this mode of procedure which studies the material and formal causes, Luther can temporarily employ Aristotelean language to characterize the theological mode of procedure. Theology deals with the "efficient and final causes" of existence which do not come into view from the natural science perspective. Therefore Luther criticises it, not in its own right, but as a comprehensive world view.[7] The final and efficient causes deal with "who did the creating and for what purpose

He created."[8] Here existent realities are viewed in relation to a divine intentionality beyond their own matter and form. Existence as a whole and human beings have a purpose which does not lie within them as isolated entities. The term "cause" to characterize this relationship to a purpose hidden from empirical investigation does not refer to some first cause or another immanent cause which has a predictable effect. As Loefgren accurately notes, "For Luther creation stands in relation to the Creator as highest will, who gives the creatures form, pattern and life out of nothing." Thus "the relation of creation to its source is . . . not the relation of effect to its cause."[9] As we shall see below in reference to man fulfilling his divine purpose and to existence fulfilling its historical nature, God cannot, and does not, desire to be a compelling cause. This would destroy what he is trying to create: human freedom.

The "technical language" of theology or the distinctive terminology of the Bible gives a far better indication than does the language of causes, to what dimensions of existence theology attends. For example the created realities are called "words of God, created by the uncreated Word."[10] It is said that God created all things by speaking. "Thus sun, moon, heaven, earth, Peter, Paul, I, you, etc.--we are all words of God. . . ."[11] In alternative language, Luther can say, "Now the whole creation is a face or mask of God."[12] There is a web of relationships between an uncreated Speaker, his concrete words or faces, and man as the "hearer" or the one being faced. Thus the theological terminology is taken, not from the scientific categories of "causes," but from the categories of "communication" and "relationship." Because the language-systems deal with different aspects, their findings do not conflict with one another. For example, an astronomer can look at the luminaries of heaven in terms of what causes them to shine; the theologian looks at them as expressions of God's goodness toward man.[13] Or again, the scientist may study man in terms of his natural endowments, his social characteristics, and the continuities or discontinuities of his development. Without negating any of this, the theologian views humans and their social roles as parent, teacher, or magistrate as "faces" of God by means of which God faces the child, the pupil, or the subject.[14] Non-human and human creatures are thus seen, not as entities in themselves, but in their "divine" role of communicating God's will to others. Each creature exists in this dual relationship to God and others.

Before we give a detailed exposition of the communicational relationships which are present in "God's creation," we can briefly preview a "communicational" way of seeing "God," "existence as a whole," and "man." Because of the communicational web, the meaning and reality of these concepts can only arise together. The communication process is central to who and what they are. To view "man" or "nature" as isolated entities is impossible for Luther as theologian, since what one sees would be a metaphysical abstraction.[15] Dietrich Bonhoeffer expresses the communicational perspective in the following dialectic: "I never experience the reality of God without the reality of the world or the reality of the world without the reality of God."[16] In previewing the God-man relationship whose central term is "the world" or "existence," we are looking at that dimension of existence which is the basis of both religion and moral responsibility.

For Luther to speak of God is to speak of existent realities as the concrete "words of the uncreated Word." God is the creative will or word which creates by speaking and therefore expresses itself in existent realities. He is the principle beyond the material and formal causes which allows existence to be an ongoing transcendent communication to man.

Corresponding to God's will as the creative principle in existence, man, too, is more than "matter and form." Beyond his "natural endowments" of body and mind, he has the "spiritual endowment" of a "heart" or spirit which can relate to the hidden Will or creative Spirit in existence.[17] This grounding of the human spirit in the hidden divine Will is the source of man's freedom to act and create. As a creature which beyond body and mind has a spirit, man is a response-able creature. Those perspectives which study man in terms of cause and effect do not adequately explain man's varying responses to daily existence. They do not see that the same person can transform his whole way of responding with a "change of heart," i.e., a change of the grounding of the spirit.[18] In this thumbnail sketch of a Christian anthropology, we can see that Luther's theological view of man focuses on freedom and responsibility. It is these two "spiritual endowments" which allow man to live in communication with existence as God's address.

The middle term in the communication process between God and man is existence. As both a transcendent address and a series of human responses, existence is an historical process. History is created by the natural and social givens of a particular situation in time calling for the response of human decisions and free activity. Existence is not a finished product like a house or ship turned over to man as the owner.[19] Nor does it "take its own independent course" unfolding inexorably, as we heard. Rather it is "continuous creation" and therefore ongoing God-man communication in time. "God's act of creation," says Loefgren, "is . . . a process and has a history."[20] Time is the point of encounter between the divine will and the human will.[21] Any attempt to find and apply a timeless truth or a timeless pattern of living on daily existence would thereby negate God's freedom as Speaker, existence as God's historical process, and man as a responsive creature in creation and time.

The address-response relationship which turns existence into an historical process is the basis for religion and morality as necessary phenomena of authentic human existence. The concrete "words" of existence demand a human response in free activity for which man, and not some timeless idea, must take moral responsibility. The source of this freedom to take responsibility is the trust of the human "heart." The role of religion is to allow man's spirit to ground itself in the hidden God in trust.

To unfold human historical existence as a communication network with a religious and moral dimension, we will now look in greater detail at existence as transcendent address and then look at human existence as response to this address. Existence as history will come into view from both the perspectives of "address" and "response," and therefore will not be treated separately.

2. Existence as Transcendent Address

It is impossible to know "God" or what "God" is when one searches for him as an entity-in-itself. Nor can one find God's "eternal" will as a body of timeless truths and moral principles. Such an attempt ignores both one's epistemological limits as a creature in time and space and also one's nature as a creation of God who "has his existence from the beginning under the workings of the will of God."[22] One would be searching for a Creator of all from a stance which denies that one is a creature.

Luther deals with our epistemological limits when he says that "our mind cannot grasp what lies outside time."[23] Luther does not deny that beyond the concrete realities in time there is the realm of God who cannot be contained comprehensively in anything created. God is not identical with the created; he is the Creator who transcends the created. Although Luther calls everything beyond the created "God" or "God's power,"[24] he does not presume to know "what this is that we call God. He is above body, above spirit, above everything man can say or hear or think. . . ."[25] We will not reach whatever it is that is called "God" when we try to transcend creation in time. Luther warns us that far from glimpsing or feeling something divine, "you will get into an area where there is no measure, no space, no time, and into the merest nothing, concerning which, according to the philosopher, there can be no knowledge."[26] Our inability to perceive the timeless or uncreated means that we cannot see God by "direct perception."[27] In less philosophic terminology, we cannot see God "face to face," i.e., without some created and temporal "covering" or "mask."[28] God as he is in himself, his "uncovered divine essence,"[29] his "uncreated Word" or "divine thought" and will[30]--all are inaccessible to us, once we recognize that we cannot have any direct knowledge of God. Thus, not only the inner workings of God are hidden from us, but also the guiding principles of his ongoing creating and the will of God as some knowable idea or as a collection of eternal religious or moral truths.

Because the limit of our mind is not a temporary blindness brought about, e.g., by sin, but is a created limit from the beginning of authentic existence, "revelation" or any intentional manifestations of God cannot "unveil" God to disclose an uncovered divine essence. Revelation and intentional communication must themselves be a "created coverings" of God, not only in their outer form, but in their content--which cannot be "timeless truths."[31] When Luther lists an example of the created works which

God sets before us because we cannot grasp him by direct perception, he includes works of "creation" and "revelation." "Such works are: that He created the heaven and the earth, that He sent His Son, that He speaks through His Son, that He baptizes, that He absolves from sin through the Word."[32] Thus because of our creaturely nature, God cannot communicate to us uncreated or timeless realities at any point of our existence.

What relevance does the notion of a Creator-God have, if we cannot transcend existence in time to discover the eternal which guides us or which is to be our moral guide? The notion of a God, while it does not give us any information beyond the created and temporal, gives us a new way of assessing, and responding to, our concrete existence in time. Intentional Christian communication or "revelation" tells us that existence is "good creation" because it is "God's creation." On the one hand, this assessment means that we do not have to transcend existence in time to find the divine purpose of our life, since existence itself is the true expression of the divine will--a will which means creaturely man well. On the other hand, this view of existence, which regards a gracious God to be its source, means that existence transcends us. We are not autonomous selves who from out of our own will can, or should, control existence and time. Rather we are embedded creatures who are confronted by a divine will in the concrete realities which make up our world. Existence transcends us by being God's concrete address.

Luther expresses the goodness and transcendence of existence in the images that God is clothed in creation[33] or that all the works of God are created by the uncreated Word.[34] We have to unfold these images to understand the assessment of existence given by the notion of a well-meaning God. Central to both images is that God himself must be present in existent realities, if he alone is affirmed as the Creator. It is "the one simple Deity himself" which is present as will and power of creating and preserving, even if the Bible has multiple images for what is the creative principle, such as "God's power, arm, hand, nature, face, Spirit, wisdom, etc." or "his Word."[35] Luther conceives of the connection between God and his creations in the most intimate terms, as the following passage from the sacrament treatise, "This is My Body--" shows:

> For he [viz., God] dispatches no officials or angels when he creates or preserves something, but all this is the work of his divine power itself. If he is to create or preserve it . . . he must be present and must make and preserve his creation both in its innermost and outermost aspects.
>
> Therefore, indeed, he himself must be present in every single creature in its innermost and outermost being, on all sides, through and through, below and above, before and behind, so that nothing can be more truly present and within all creatures than God himself with his power.[36]

The intimate connection between God and his creations shows that when God "covers," "clothes," "veils," or "masks" himself, he is not doing this to hide himself from man--except from direct perception. Creation is not a disguise of someone whose will and intentions are totally different from what he does. Rather, existence truly expresses God's creative will. God "masks" himself in creation, so that he or his will can "face" us. Luther remarks that "the [created] works of God are set before us so that we can grasp them."[37] We do not have to search for God's inner Word or will beyond existence, because it is present in existence. "What else is the entire creation than the Word of God uttered by God, or extended to the outside [viz., into the realm of space and time]?"[38]

When Luther speaks of "God clothed in creation," he is giving an interpretation of the existent realities of our world today and not of some idealized realm of so-called pure nature. As soon as one looks beyond the Lectures on Genesis and the topics Genesis suggests, for example, to the Lectures on Galatians, one sees that the term "creation" includes the whole realm of social living with its human activities and changing orders. In these lectures, Luther formulates the previously cited image, that the whole creation is a face or mask of God, in such a way as to provide a theological basis for his affirmation that present social positions--even those held by sinful humans--are God's masks or instruments for preserving and governing the world.[39] "God wants us to respect and acknowledge them [viz., the social positions] as his creatures, which are a necessity for this life."[40] Thus God is present not only in the "natural" or biological aspects of humans, but in their social functions carried out by their own activity. God is clothed in such social roles as "the teacher, the preacher, the pupil, the father, the children, the master, the servant,"[41] since it is by the Word or commanding will of God that these roles of service exist.[42] God is not present in some ideal, timeless or biblical social order with divinely predetermined social positions and unchanging social relationships. God is present simultaneously in various social orders differing with place and culture. And the orders of any given culture and place have changed with the times, without ceasing to be God's instruments for creating, preserving and governing humans as relational-social beings.[43] Because God is thus clothed, not only in nature and natural orders, but also in social "creatures" and the social orders of existence in time and history, the human "encounters God at all points of his existence."[44]

At the same time that Luther stresses that God creates and is present "in" our present natural and social reality, he also emphasizes that this is an indirect presence of God. It is "indirect" in the sense that, even after creation, God and his will are not accessible to us as knowable entities or objective knowledge. After Luther has fended off any transcendent knowledge of God, he is not now encouraging an immanent knowledge of some divine principles or eternal truths that could be uncovered from the temporal vagaries of creation. It is the notion that God creates and is clothed in time which militates against any knowledge-approach to discerning the divine or absolute. Knowledge by its nature attempts to abstract the lasting from the temporal. For knowledge to be useful to humans, it must give information which is applicable to a variety of situations and times. But the God-dimension of existence--both in its religious and moral aspects--is present for us only in time, in the particular, and not in the timeless and general.

Luther's attempt to articulate a presence of God in time and history explains his lack of interest in the Logoschristology of the Apologetes.[45] The Word which creates is, for Luther, not a Logos or universal form and principle which comes to man in concrete logoi that inform the human logos or reason and perception. Rather, the concrete "words" and "faces" which express God come from the inaccessible uncreated Word. There is no immanent link between creation and the Word which creates. Luther expresses this in the concept of creatio ex nihilo. In discussing the creation of light by the omnipotent Word, Luther remarks: "And when it [viz., the Word] was spoken, light was brought into existence, not out of the matter of the Word or from the nature of Him who spoke but out of darkness itself [viz., out of nothing]."[46] Luther's language in this passage clearly alludes to the categories of material and formal causes which define the matter and nature of a thing. The Word is not such a cause. It is not an immanent principle, or, in Loefgren's words, "a substrate of nature."[47] God's essence and Word remain ungraspable.

There are two related consequences from the indirect nature of God's presence. One consequence is that we should not "attribute divinity" to anything created.[48] The created remains thoroughly creaturely and does not have some divine dimension as intrinsic quality or principle. There is not something about nature which is divine or eternal. Similarly no social order is in itself divine or eternally valid. At best they are "God's creatures" which are valid in a given time and place as long as they serve their function of social governing.[49] Any fear or worship of a given created order or of the status quo as something ultimate is a false identification of the created with God's will. One is converting something into a direct presence of God.

The second, closely related, consequence is that any concrete reality is only "divine" when one views it as God's concrete words. The divinity of creation lies in its function to be the concrete address of an otherwise ungraspable divine will. God's presence in existence is thus "indirect," because one cannot discern anything divine in existence unless one responds to existence as God's address. God is present for us only in concrete interactions. However, even "interaction" or "living in relationship" to the God clothed in creation is not a way of knowing more and more about God or about his eternal plans. Each new reality and each new time does not give us more and more information about God and his will, but gives us a new opportunity to respond to this particular situation in our life as his presence and word. Concrete words are "spoken" to us by God, not so that we should use them to "figure out" the Speaker, but so that we respond to them. This is indirect communication at the level of existence.

After having noted the concreteness and indirectness of God's clothed presence, we can now understand how the notion of a Creator-God interprets our existence as both transcendent and good.

The transcendence of concrete existence is given by the notion of an ungraspable divine will as its source and purpose. While one cannot prove or demonstrate that there is a divine will in existence,[50] there are many phenomena which point to the uncontrollable nature of our existence in the world. The clearest of these is "time." "What time gives" or "what the occasion calls for" are phrases which Luther uses as a synonym for "what the will of God asks of us."[51] We encounter the transcendence of our existence --which means existence that is not under the control of our will --when "time" confronts us with tasks to be done, decisions to be made, or suffering and adversity to be borne--all of which we did not choose.

Aside from "time," the very "givenness" of our natural and social existence is a witness to existence as the creation of a will other than ours. Neither do we choose, nor can we control our "natural endowments" and the time, culture, and society into which we are born. We are called to respond and act in relation to givens we do not control. We are not autonomous selves who develop the world from out of our own egos. We are creatures embedded in nature, society, and time. Luther interprets our non-mastery of existence with the notion of a Creator-God. The concrete and temporal givens and challenges are "words of the uncreated Word." To regard the people, orders, and circumstances of our life as "words" of God--rather than viewing them as objects to be known and controlled--is to encounter transcendence in those things which are closest to us. The "others" call us to respond or have a claim on our attention--that is the ongoing experience of God's presence in the concrete. We have a function and responsibility beyond developing our individual matter and form.

That the ongoing address-dimension of concrete existence in time is our experience of transcendence, or of the God-dimension of reality, is a distinctive view of transcendence. "Transcendence" is not primarily associated with the fact that God can never be contained totally in the created--as if the problem of transcendence were the mathematical problem of some logical axiom that the finite cannot contain the infinite. "Transcendence" is associated with God's presence "in" the finite and created--figuratively speaking. It is the finite as particular and time-specific which is our encounter with a transcendent God. The general and predictable we can know. But knowledge is not adequate for dealing with the particulars time gives us. It does not deal with the dimension of address-response which alone is the way humans can appropriately take time, and their own temporal natures and minds, seriously. Only as we keep on being responsive to the particulars in time can we "learn" from time and be shaped continually by existence. Address-response is therefore the way in which God uses his "words" and "faces" to create us throughout our lives. Human existence is, for Luther, "ongoing creation."

The goodness of concrete existence in time is also given by the notion that the eternal God himself, the source and purpose of all that is, is present in the concrete and temporal. Only when one interprets one's non-mastery of existence (whose reminder is time) as the divine intent, will one not try to transcend this temporal world for some divine or ideal realm beyond. The notion that "God is represented in full concreteness in the world which surrounds him," rather than the Godhead surrounding him "like a realm of ideas," allows man to affirm the goodness of his temporal life.[52]

Luther never thinks of existence in time and its temporal orders in terms of a mere temporal approximation of some pure idea or essence.

This, however, does not mean that he has to endorse all the evil of the world as "good." Rather than using the schema of "ideal versus real" which cannot adequately affirm the "goodness" of time and the particular, Luther uses the schema of proper use and egocentric abuse to critically appraise created orders.[53] With this schema, Luther can affirm the "goodness" of a whole range of different social, political, economic, familial, and religious orders that have arisen in history--as "faces" or "instruments" of God's will--and at the same time criticize these orders when they become objects of worship and no longer serve the welfare of the neighbor. It is thus the real historical world which is "good" creation.

When Luther speaks of existence as being "good"--in spite of such things as adversity, suffering, and death--,he is not referring to some intrinsic goodness as a quality of existent realities.[54] A detached observer cannot see the "goodness" which Luther means, since observation would measure the goodness of a given life or situation on the basis of some idea of a "good life." For Luther, the "goodness" of existence is necessarily as invisible and undemonstrable as the presence of God, since the presence of God's will is it's goodness. It is an act of faith, not of observation, to accept whatever happens to us and whatever tasks we have to fulfill in life as "good and serviceable to us," namely, as a part of our relationship to God and his concretely expressed will.[55] The development of this thought must wait. At present we are concerned with the "goodness" of existence lying in the will of God--which will imply that we only participate in this "goodness" as we relate to, and respond to, this will. God's will remains ungraspable as knowledge or content. However, from "revelation" or intentional Christian communication we receive the witness that this divine will means man well. "The good will of God toward man" is virtually a synonym for the spoken or intentional Word of God.[56] It is thus a good will toward us which we encounter in the transcendence of our existence. Creation is "for man"--not for his exclusive benefit, but benevolent to his authentic being and becoming. Therefore it is characteristic that Luther calls the "will" or "uncreated Word," which is God's means of creation, "Christ." It is the second Person of the Trinity who is the Word through whom and to whom all things were made.[57] Christ is the Word in creation, not as the Logos which enlightens the human mind, but as the light of grace[58] which enlightens the human "heart" or "spirit" with the graciousness of God's ungraspable will.[59] Existence is "good," because the God who is clothed in creation is gracious to man.

In sum: To speak of God is, for Luther, to give an interpretation of concrete existence in time as the presence of a divine will which means man well. Man encounters the God-dimension of reality in the ongoing transcendent address of existence. God is present for man only in this communicational relationship of address calling for human response. We must now turn our attention to the dynamics of this response.

3. The Human Response

What does the view, which sees existence as divine address, say about man and his nature? In a preliminary way, we can say that this view implies that the essence of humans can only be understood when one considers the communication network between God, historical realities, and man. We cannot uncover the true nature of man which makes him human, when we look at him as an autonomous self or an isolated entity. To regard existence theologically as part of an ongoing divine-human dialogue implies, on the one hand, that man is a creature who is embedded in natural and social realities which transcend his control. It implies, on the other hand, that man is addressed by existence and called to respond to it as the words of God. It thus belongs to man's nature to continually respond to the addresses of life. It equally belongs to man's authentic nature that he has faith in the Creator of existence and its created dynamics. Only when man trusts the good intentions of the hidden source of daily occurrences and realities, will he be free to be responsive to the demands of the occasion. When he loses this faith, he will withdraw from a life of ongoing dialogue and hide behind some defensible and secure perimeters.

Faith and responsibility thus characterize man as a creature. He is not only a natural being with natural endowments that unfold--such as mind, emotions, and body--,but also a spiritual being whose nature it is to live in communication with the Creator. He does this by trusting the good intentions of life's hidden source and by responding in openness to the daily challenges as words of the Creator. Faith and responsibility are the anthropological counterparts of existence as the concrete, yet hidden, presence of a good God.

As we now unfold how faith and responsibility are necessary for authentic human existence, we will uncover those phenomena in man which are the basis of any significant role of religious and moral communication in human becoming. To understand human existence as a response to existence-as-divine-address, we must see (a) that it is man's authentic nature and purpose to be an embedded and responsible being, (b) that man's actions are guided by the natural imperative of love or free activity, and (c) that faith is the source of this free activity.

a. Man's nature as embedded and responsible being

Viewed from a theological perspective, man is not an autonomous entity who can be understood in isolation from existence and God. In Wingren's words, "Man cannot evolve his life from within his ego, or plan it in any kind of elevation above time. He is at the mercy of realities over which he is not master."[60] These realities over which man is not the master are the natural and social givens and the reality of time--within all of which man is embedded. These are the realities in which man experiences the "transcendence of existence," as I call it. In Luther's language, we can say that man is embedded in creation, which is the clothed presence of God. All those things we described from the God-ward side as God's presence in creation can be seen from man's viewpoint as the reality of his lack of control over life. Man's experience that he is not the master is his encounter with the God-dimension of reality. Wingren captures this view of Luther's in the continuation of the above passage when he says, "Man has to accept life from God's hands, for it is definitely God who stands behind all that different times bring him. Man is at the mercy of this almighty God."[61] To be embedded in a given existence is to be surrounded by the reality of a divine will which challenges all pretensions that man is autonomous.

Aside from being a natural and temporal creature, man is at the same time a social creature. It is in this social embedment that we most clearly can see that embedment implies responsibility. Therefore we must briefly elaborate on this dimension of human nature. Man is a social creature, because "in the earthly realm man always stands in relatione, always bound to another."[62] Man is not an autonomous entity who also relates to others as two autonomous entities may interact. Rather it is his nature or part of his being to be in relationship. Luther refers to these relationships to other people as "social positions,"[63] "stations," or "callings"[64] to characterize them as orders of creation which are instituted by divine command.[65] It is a "divine institution" that we relate to others in such functionally (not valuationally) differentiated "stations" as magistrate and subject, father and son, teacher and pupil, or master and servant.[66] Any person lives in many of these role-relationships or callings at the same time. To use Wingren's example, "the same man is . . . father of his children, husband of his wife, master of his servants, and office-holder in the town hall."[67] Man is thus never an isolated or private individual, but always a web of role-relationships which belong to his nature as a human.

That man is a multiplicity of roles does not negate individual personhood or a responsible self as the "core" of the social creature, as we shall see shortly. By way of preview we should note that, for Luther, man is also "heart" or "inner man" in contrast to his outer social being. As "heart," man relates in trust to some ultimate or god to give meaning and focus to his actions in the various relations. Because of this "god-relationship" of the heart, man is also a self or a "single person."[68] But just as one cannot find the naked God if one strips away created orders and "faces," so--to play with Luther's language--one cannot find the naked self or heart by stripping away man's various role-relationships. The human heart--man's guiding trust--is present only incarnate in the works man does in his various callings.[69]

The human embedment in nature, time, and social roles--which does not negate an individual self--is, according to Luther, divine address. These existent realities are words of God to man. The significance of this interpretation of human embedment is that existence calls man to respond. Man does not receive his roles as fate or by a compelling omnipotent fiat. Rather man receives his roles and the tasks they imply by an "express mandate" or "command" of God.[70] The concrete "words" of God are called "mandates" or "commands" when viewed as calls to human responsibility. The mandate of God is not some objectifiable body of laws which God wants man to apply to his daily life. Rather: "God's commands are active in all orders and stations, in all outer things and circumstances, and thereby man's existence is totally shaped and ruled (bestimmt und beherrscht) by God every moment."[71] To interpret man's embedment by the notion of God's mandate therefore underlines that man is constantly dependent on God's will. It is God's will which gives him the tasks he has to fulfill. Man does not choose his tasks or roles, rather "works pour in on man from the outside, through the very movement of life."[72] Man is not created to evolve timeless plans, but to do "what the occasion calls for" in his daily life.[73] That God's mandate or commands determine man also expresses itself in the fact that man is ceaselessly driven to be active[74] --and within relationships which make him serve others whether he wants to or not.[75]

The concept of "mandate" also expresses "that man is created for self-activity."[76] Man is called to act on his own and to take personal responsibility for his actions. He is not only an embedded creature, but also a response-able being, namely, someone who can respond actively to the address of existence. Thus we conclude that man receives a variety of roles by the fact of relational existence. However, these roles, or "divinely ordained" functions, are only actualized when man becomes independently active. The fact that man can ignore these mandates of existence shows, by way of the negative, that man is a self who has a will and can be held accountable for his actions.[77]

We can now see that a theological perspective views human nature as the anthropological counterpart to the clothed God. Just as God is not an entity removed from the historical world of natural and social creations, but rather addresses man in the world, so man is not an autonomous self, but an embedded creature who responds to the address. Since man is thus regarded as a part of a communication network, one cannot describe his nature as a self-contained object. Nor can one know human nature in terms of its final form--as some endproduct of living. Human nature can only be described in terms of the response-relationships which constitute man as a process in time. Man will become what the ungraspable will of God ordains, if he keeps on living in ongoing dialogue with what time or occasion presents. Human nature is thus not described in terms of development toward wholeness or final authenticity. Rather human wholeness can be present at any moment as man accepts a situation as God's call to responsibility. This implies that man also can lose his "nature" or "wholeness"--as spiritual or responsible being, not as natural being--when he ceases to live in response to existence as God's mandate. While man's "matter and form," his body and mind, may develop according to age and circumstance, man's being and becoming is determined by his acceptance or rejection of God's mandate.[78]

An important implication of viewing human wholeness or authenticity as man's way of responding to the address of existence is that to be truly religious or Christian is synonymous with being truly human. What characterizes the religious person is not any specific religious works which he does in addition to daily life, or in contrast to the secular works of others. Rather he is distinctive because he accepts the transcendence of existence in faith and therefore responds to God's mandate in existence with self-activity. Or, expressed in different language, he is characterized by the fact that he interprets existence as "good creation" and therefore is free to be responsive to what the occasion calls for. There is no decisive outward expression for the life of Christians--as if they were called to do some prescribed special works.[79] Rather what distinguishes their works is inward, namely, their way of seeing, and responding to, the daily tasks in their multiple callings. Luther puts it this way:

> Externally there is not much difference between the Christian and another socially upright human being. . . . He does his duty according to his calling; he rules the commonwealth; he runs the household; he tills the field; he helps, supports and serves his neighbor.[80]

Although there is no directly recognizable external distinction of the works of Christians, there is an inward one, namely, that these works are "done in faith, in a joyful spirit, obedience and gratitude toward God."[81] That this way of responding to tasks in faith and obedience leaves the works "cheap and meager in appearance"[82] does not mean that the process of doing does not affect the work and what is actually done. Rather, as we shall see in the next two sections, only by faith and responsiveness can one avoid abusing the works and can one fulfill them according to their "divine" purpose in life. The inwardness given by religion and faith is necessary for true secular living.[83]

Once we recognize that religion, faith, and all those disciplines and activities which create and sustain them (i.e., intentional Christian communication) deal with man's way of seeing, and responding to, daily existence, we find that there are no human activities in which man's true (or false) religion is not at stake. There is no separate religious realm isolated from the secular realm of social, political, economic, and familial roles and responsibilities. Luther therefore constantly fends off those views of religion and religious activity which negate authentic humanness, namely, man's responsibility to God in all of created existence. Religion and such necessary religious activities as worship, prayer, spiritual discipline, etc.--which we will discuss under intentional Christian communication--can never be an end in themselves, as if God called us to be some kind of "religious man" (homo religious), rather than calling us to exist--as humans. In the following quote, Luther shows his affirmation of existence as good creation in his rejection of those who not only try to prescribe "good works" by outward criteria, but also reduce them to religious activities:

> If you ask . . . whether they [viz., those who try to lead a churchly prescribed good life] consider it a good work when a man works at his trade, walks, stands, eats, drinks, sleeps, and does all kinds of works for the nourishment of his body or for the common welfare, and whether they believe that God is well pleased with them, you will find that they say no, and that they define good works so narrowly that they are made to consist only of praying in church, fasting, and almsgiving.[84]

In this quote we see that all of existence, whether we deal with bodily needs, occupation, or social welfare, are "good works," i.e., works which please God,--when they are done in faith, as the context shows. For Luther, "God is served by all things that may be done, spoken, or thought in faith."[85] Luther is not trying to add "secular" works to the "religious" works to broaden our area of doing. He is trying to bring about a shift in perspective, so that the religious and the secular are not seen as two separate realms, but rather as being related to one another as the inner guide is to outer actions. It is for the same reason that Luther exalts the works a person does in his daily callings in a society where "religious orders" were the ideal form of existence.[86] There is nothing automatically good in the callings of laypersons, in contrast to the callings of those in religious vocations. In both, the way of doing decides whether the works are done as a response to God's mandate in faith or whether they are done egocentrically. (As we shall see, "religious callings" are also an order of creation--and therefore open to being done in faith or distrust.) Thus we can conclude that for Luther there are not two separate realms of existence, one religious and one secular, but only one created existence with multiple callings which are to be fulfilled by a certain way of doing --namely, in faith and responsibility. This is the way to embedded and responsible humanness.

We now turn to a consideration of how God guides the human way of responding to the address of existence. First, we will look at the natural imperative of love or free activity given by relational existence and then we will look at the role of faith as the source of free activity and love.

b. The natural imperative of love or free activity

Created existence in time, and not timeless ideas, is the point of encounter between God's will and man. This epistemological principle also applies to God's means of guiding the way authentic humans ought to respond to the works that pour in through the process of living in multiple role-relationships. Existence in time mediates God's will to man, since God's mandate or commands are present in all that surrounds us. This will can be responded to, but it cannot be abstracted from existence as objective knowledge of God's will which is applicable in all times and all places. God's Word and mandate are, in the words of Nilsson, not means to gain insight into God's eternal will and to evaluate human action.[87] God's mandate in existence is rather the encounter between God and man[88] which never allows man the isolation or autonomy to observe God from a safe vantage. He is faced by God and must respond.[89] Man ignores his nature of being continually addressed and forgets his epistemological limits when he tries to identify any body of laws or moral principles with God's eternal truth.[90] While Luther acknowledges that moral laws and their knowledge have a valid function in gaining and maintaining a minimal external social order--if they are not absolutized--, he clearly negates that this knowledge is the key to authentic human responsibility.[91] Man encounters God's will as concrete address, not as knowledge.

If one cannot transcend creation and time, what guides the human response to the address of concrete situations? The mandate in existence itself demands, not prescribed actions, but a certain way of responding. This demand or imperative, given by the fact of human existence, Luther calls the "natural law." It is epitomized in the commandment to love the neighbor.[92] One encounters the imperative to serve the neighbor in one's multiple role-relationships to others. One is "called" by existence (and its Creator) to be a parent, a teacher, or a magistrate. These roles demand a variety of works that are of benefit to the "neighbor," i.e., to the other party of the relationships. The other person requires parenting, teaching, or governing. Those who seem to be on the receiving end--the child, learner, or subject--are given these benefits so that they in turn, in their own time and circumstances, may be of useful service to society. If we are not willing to accept our "positions of authority" as an imperative to serve those dependent on us in these asymmetrical relationships, we must see it as our own fault that "there is no discipline, government, or peace, of which we all complain."[93] In contrast, "if we wish to have excellent and apt persons both for civil and ecclesiastical government, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children. . . ."[94] It is thus social existence itself which relates us to others and demands that we fulfill our various callings "for the welfare and betterment of our neighbor."[95] The natural law that is to guide, not what we do, but how we do our daily tasks is written into created existence.[96]

Before pursuing what kind of actions this natural imperative demands, we must pause to consider that love or service is an imperative calling for human self-activity, rather than being a compelling force of existence. Man is embedded in the roles of service, as we can now call them; but these roles are mandates and not an omnipotent fiat. While it is true that our roles pressure us to work for the benefit of others, it is equally true that we all are easily tempted to use our positions or stations for our own benefit. It is a sign of God's grace that in spite of our egocentric abuses and our corruptions of created orders and social roles some rudimentary order still prevails and that we may do some social good independent of our egocentric intentions. God preserves and governs his world through social positions which sinful and unbelieving people hold.[97] But the "good result" in spite of our egocentricity may not detract from the fact that only when man responds to the imperative willingly, will the roles truly fulfill their "divinely ordained" function.[98] Callings are concretely present in existence. But they are not direct communication or a compelling force. They are mandates which can be ignored. They are only understood by those who actively respond. "All stations are intended to serve others," says Luther. "But we go now this way and now that."[99] It is because our callings or stations have no direct way to impress the natural law or mandate on us, that a significant part of all intentional Christian communication will be to articulate the commands in these vocations.[100] Far from being a direct force in existence, God's natural law is an imperative calling for a type of human activity which is seldom forth-coming. We can thus see the indirect nature of God's concrete communication when we look at the ills of society. They are the products of humans who did not acknowledge God's commands. Luther describes the cause for the ills of society as follows:

> . . . all live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though we were only to gratify our wantonness with our subjects, ignoring them as though it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live; *and no one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty* [viz., that we work for their, not our benefit], who will most strictly call us to account and punish us for it . . .[101]

Thus it is only when we acknowledge God's command or imperative written into existence by actual service for the welfare of the neighbor that the natural law shapes our actions and lets our works be God's present works of love.

We can now turn to describing the kind of actions which the natural-law-in-existence demands of us. The imperative is that we do the works of "serving another person *through love*."[102] In these words, Luther is describing not a product to be achieved, but *a way of interacting*. This way of interacting is as natural and as much a part of human existence as "the other" who requires my "service." "You do not need any professor to tell you about this matter; merely consult your own heart, and it will give you abundant instruction that you should love your neighbor as you love yourself."[103] Your heart does not give you the necessary information, education, or skills for *what* to do in your vocations. Here you require a "liberal education."[104] But your heart naturally indicates *how* to use your education and knowledge. In obeying the imperative, the *content* of your actions remain the works of vocation, since "there is nothing . . . that falls in a private sphere lying outside of station, office, or vocation."[105] The process of your vocational work is "love," whether the work is in the familial, the economic, or political realms.[106]

A first characteristic of love as a way of doing one's daily works is that it demands that a person be free to serve others rather than oneself. Love "is neither called forth by anything that someone deserves nor deterred by what is undeserving and ungrateful."[107] Relational roles can only be fulfilled through love, because love acknowledges any neighbor as having a claim on my works. Love sees that even "one who has done me some sort of injury or harm has not shed his humanity on that account or stopped being flesh and blood, a creature of God very much like me; in other words he does not stop being my neighbor."[108] It is not qualities or actions but the common human nature between the other and me which lets me acknowledge him as neighbor. The imperative of love is, therefore, that we are accountable not to some idea of good humans or of objects worthy of our vocational works, but to humanity or humanness. The person who acts in love is someone who is free from any standards of what makes someone "worth my time and effort." He does not judge others in terms of their advantage or benefit to himself. Therefore love puts the neighbor as the focus of our actions. He is the clothed presence of God before which we are accountable. Wingren remarks, "It is the neighbor who stands at the center of Luther's ethics, not God's kingdom or God's law or 'character.'"[109] Any other reason for our actions, such as establishing God's kingdom on earth or creating one's own moral character, would deprive us of the necessary freedom to truly serve the other. We would always have ulterior motives--even with the best intentions--which are bound to affect our doing (subtly or overtly). The natural law of relational existence thus demands a freedom from self-concern which is a freedom to truly serve the other "as long as human nature remains in him."[110]

If the first characteristic of the imperative of love is a demand to be free to attend to the neighbor, the second characteristic is a demand for us to be free to act on our own. It is this dimension we now have to unfold at length, since it is central to Luther's notion of human responsibility. If man is to respond to the address of vocational works (whose focus is the neighbor), then he must be free to act on his own. If he is not free in his responses, he cannot be held personally accountable for the consequences of his action. Such is the case, e.g. with prescribed "good works" whose "goodness" is supposedly guaranteed by God (or the church). Man would simply apply them to daily existence, rather than being responsive to existence. The process of life with its ceaseless activity can never be captured in prescriptions. Life demands free, creative and attentive responses. For Luther, it is lack of confidence before God which cripples the free activity of man. Where there is no free activity, there is no (vocational) "love," since freedom to create and be responsive is what Luther means by "love." Luther illustrates that non-prescribed, or free, activity can alone fulfill the divine addresses in life by the following analogy:

> When a husband and wife really love one another . . . and thoroughly believe in their love, who teaches them how to behave one to another, what they are to do or not to do, say or not to say, what they are to think? Confidence alone teaches them all this and even more than necessary.[111]

Just as husband and wife need no instructions, fixed conventions or objective laws of what is the right or good action of a spouse if they trust one another, so anyone who trusts that he is acceptable to God (and therefore also does not worry whether he is approved of by men) will be free to act on his own in all his callings. He will freely use his reason and all his natural endowments to make his own decisions on how best to carry out his roles at this particular time and place--whether in home, church or state.

We will look at trust as the source of this freedom to act on our own in the next section. At present we are concerned to establish that, for Luther, "free activity" is what the natural law of existence demands.[112] Man is called by God to "have dominion" or freely rule over the created.[113] (This, of course implies a rule which includes the protection and preservation of earth and its creatures.) And this freedom to use the created implies that the use is for the welfare of humanity. Again we have to move away from Lectures on Genesis and its topics to see that man's free rule goes beyond building houses and tending cattle without divine prescriptions. It includes free activity--using reason, etc.--in all created orders. Man may not attribute divinity to any created order, whether it be in church or state.[114] Rather he is free and responsible in his use and adaptations of these "good creatures of God." There are no eternal or directly-divine orders to hide behind. For example, Luther criticizes the lack of freedom and personal responsibility which people displayed in adhering to churchly rules about fasting, etc., even when they threatened bodily health or endangered the fetus in pregnant women.[115] When fasting or other disciplines are "imposed beyond the body's endurance or more than is necessary for the killing of lust [viz., self-will] . . .--then in these circumstances let no man imagine he has done good works or excuse himself by referring to the church's command or the rule of his order."[116] Man cannot hide from responsibility--not even behind the rules of his church or of the state. He is responsible for the consequences of his acts. Therefore he must be viewed as free to regulate these issues according to the purpose they are to serve.

Man's freedom of action is not to be confused with autonomous actions in which man or his ideas become the main determinant. Rather this freedom is man's ability to respond to whatever the occasion calls for. It is the freedom to let one's actions be shaped by creation and time. Only in such responsiveness to what the particular and temporal brings can the neighbor be served and God's hidden will be done.[117] If a man were guided by his own ideas of the good, he would begin to choose amongst the works of daily life to do particularly those which are important in terms of this self-chosen goal. When man acts in freedom born of trust, "there is no distinction in works. He does the great and important as gladly as the small and unimportant, and vice versa."[118] Far from making man permissive or autonomous, trust gives him the freedom "to do all manner of work and to suffer everything just as it presents itself."[119] Free activity therefore means that man is free to accept all of existence with whatever tasks it brings as a call to personal responsibility before God. Free and responsible activity is the anthropological counterpart to a concretely present God whose eternal will remains hidden.[120]

Since the various role-relationships to others can only be fulfilled through "love," we can now substitute the synonym: they can only be done in free activity. They are roles of responsibility. Without this understanding of callings and social orders, Luther could not affirm present existence with all its ambiguities and abused orders as "good creation" without endorsing the abuse or the status quo. The callings and orders are "good" only in the sense that they are God's communication with us, i.e., his call to our free responsibility. To stress that it is the present ambiguous orders, in which we are called to free activity, Luther speaks of "obedience" to those in "positions of authority," even if the people filling the positions are "sinful"[121]--or "lowly, poor, frail, and queer."[122] These people are God's instruments and his way to face us. On the other hand, to stress our responsibility, Luther lets us notice the sins which God has these persons keep "to warn us to note the difference between this position and God Himself."[123] We are responsible before God, and therefore do not let any "position of authority" or any status quo automatically determine our actions.

Luther illustrates the importance of recognizing that our responsibility is before God, and not before the "mask" or the particular officeholder, by using the case of an unjust judge:

> I ought to respect and honor the civil judge, who is the mask of God, for the sake of God. But my conscience dare not repose its trust in his justice; nor dare it be intimidated by his tyranny. For if this happened, I could sin against God and offend Him by lying, false witness, or a denial of truth. Otherwise, where God is not involved, I should, of course, honor the judge.[124]

This example shows that for the sake of God, I have to be free to speak the truth--and am responsible to do so--even if this implies civil disobedience to the judge. I cannot excuse lying or immorality by referring to the nature of justice in our society. Even if our system is corrupt, I remain responsible to God in how I respond to this system. Civil disobedience is a form of respecting the validity of a temporal and imperfect system of justice, and is not based on a refusal to "honor the judge." Similarly, while imperfect parents remain God's instruments, children may have to disobey their parents because their responsibility demands it. Luther, who stresses obedience to created orders so much, says explicitly, "Now children are not to obey parents who are so foolish that they bring up their children after the fashion of this world [viz., "to seek nothing but the pleasure, honor, possessions, or power of this world"]. God is to be regarded more highly than parents. . . ."[125] Thus, since our ultimate obedience in all earthly matters and orders is always to God, we remain free and responsible to decide between obedience and disobedience to concrete authorities, between critique and acquiescence.[126] No matter what the "others" in our asymmetrical relationships do, even if they are in the "higher" position of authority, we must fulfill our roles in freedom and responsibility. Even disobedience can be an act of love.

We can now conclude our discussion on the type of interactive living which existence (or the natural law in it) demands, by looking at the fact that relational existence will be abused unless one is free to focus on the neighbor and free to act on one's own in response to the particulars in time. According to Luther the two major types of abuse of one's roles are caused either by "presumption of righteousness" or by "despair."[127] In "presumption" one claims one's actions are right--on the basis of some private or public idea of the good--without reference to time and its consequences for the neighbor. In "despair" one withdraws from exercising one's role or from taking any responsibility for one's actions. In both cases one is neither free to have the neighbor as the focus of one's actions, nor free to respond on one's own to what time gives. In both cases the result is destructive to social existence. This can be illustrated easily in the case of an abuse of political authority. There "tyranny is the ruler's presumption; anarchy is his despair."[128] We can recognize "presumption" in such things as having a person's (e.g., an employee's) actions so regimented or institutionalized that there is no place left for personal initiative and responsibility. We see it in authoritarian behavior and in those who rely on ideological thinking rather than entering into dialogue about an issue--to list just a few examples. We can recognize "despair" in apathy, permissiveness, hiding behind the "fashions of the world," and in rationalizing one's non-involvement. In all these variations of the two basic types of abuse, we can see that social existence is either denied or damaged. Between the presumption of knowing it all, which downgrades the address of time and of the neighbor, and the despair of withdrawal from involvement stands love as the freedom to enter into dialogue with others.

Social existence demands love which is free activity. But what is the source of this freedom? Luther's answer is: faith in God's hidden goodness.

c. Faith as the source of freedom and responsibility

What is the source of love as the way of interacting which existence demands? What is the source of true responsive-responsibility? One cannot teach responsibility by legislating acceptable social behavior nor by teaching moral or religious laws. Laws cannot bring about responsibility, according to Luther, because they cannot create freedom.

Civil, moral, and religious laws have important functions, but creating freedom is not among them. First, they provide external or internal limits for those who abuse, or are tempted to abuse, their God-given freedom of action as a "license to sin" and self-centered living. Moral laws and values can be a restraint to this self-centeredness in those who would never consider illegal or criminal activity.[129]

Secondly, the various laws are necessary because of potential and actual criminals or "wicked men, who are always ready to sin. They must be restrained like wild horses and dogs by spiritual and temporal laws, and where this does not help, they must be put to death by the temporal sword."[130] Laws and the power to enforce laws is necessary for preserving social cohesion in the face of anti-social people and actions.

Thirdly, moral laws, religious rules, and specific religious observances are important for those "who are still lusty and childish in their understanding of such faith [viz., such faith which gives freedom] and the spiritual life." They "must be coaxed like young children, enticed with external, definite concomitant adornment, with reading, praying, fasting, singing . . , and all things commanded and observed in monasteries and churches, until such time as they too learn to know the teachings of faith."[131] In this case, imposed moral and religious rules are temporary measures until a person comes to free responsibility and a free exercise of faith. They provide an outer discipline. While this discipline is necessary, it may never become a substitute for a personal or inner discipline which alone is responsive to God's address and the neighbor.

All these laws can only bring about an outward morality, religiousness, and civic righteousness.[132] But performing prescribed works or refraining from illegal and immoral acts is not the free activity of responsibility. The commitment to the neighbor and to what God gives in creation and time is not present. In fact one can be exhibiting a valued or legislated good or social behavior, not out of concern for other people, but out of self-concern. One may be on good behavior in order to prove oneself before self, God or society.[133] One would in that case be "moral" for egocentric reasons. This negates morality as responsibility to others. The neighbor's possible benefit would be incidental to one's ulterior aims.

Laws have an important role in society, but they do not create responsibility, for, as we saw, the key to responsibility is freedom. One cannot legislate freedom or acquire it as known values. To be free to respond to others on one's own, one has to be able to accept one's non-mastery of existence and acknowledge it as the ongoing address of a well-meaning

God. Therefore, for Luther, it is not outward laws and restraints, but the inward trust of the heart which is the source of responsibility. It is because of this connection of faith and responsibility that Luther can say the following:

> If every man had faith we would need no more laws. Everyone would of himself do good works all the time (and not just when some moral law is at stake), as faith shows him.[134]

Law cannot bring about that man acts "on his own," rather than by some form of outer or inner compulsion (such as fear of punishment or hope for approval). Nor can laws, being timeless, ever deal with "all times." To understand faith as the source of free activity, we must look at Luther's notion of the "trust of the heart" as the central determinant of a person's way of interacting with his world.

As we briefly noted above, man is not only a social creature embedded in multiple relationships. Man is also a single individual when viewed as "inner man."[135] As "outer man" a person is a body, soul and mind embedded in natural and social reality. As "inner man" a person is "spirit" or self relating to some source of meaning or identity--in Luther's terms, relating to some god. It is the "inner man" which determines the way one views and responds to life with one's body and soul and mind. In Luther's language, the "inner man" or self is constituted by the fact that all people have a "heart" which puts its trust into something from which they "expect all good" and to which they take refuge in distress.[136] This "something" can be anything from the ungraspable Creator to tangible or ideal things such as money, skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship and honor.[137] "That now," says Luther, "upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god."[138] Thus man is "spirit" because he has a god-relationship. The *"spirit" or "self"* of man is not an entity in man, but a relationship to that from which one expects life, meaning, the good, self-worth. The human "pole" of this relationship is "the heart" which puts its trust in something. For Luther "the heart" stands for the center of individual personhood.[139]

The human self is determined by the relationship of the heart to some god. While there is a multiplicity of gods in which one can trust, there are only two basic types of god-relationships. Either one trusts what one can control or one trusts the ungraspable and uncontrollable, which one experiences in one's non-mastery of existence. In the first case, one puts one's trust in oneself: one's own thoughts of the good or ultimate and one's own activities to bring this good about. One is setting oneself up as idol, trusting only what one can know and do. It is one's devotion to an idea of the good, or ultimate source of worth, which elevates the various tangible or ideal things to be gods.[140] In the second case, one grounds the self in the ungraspable Creator of oneself.

A key way for Luther to distinguish the two types of god-relationships is, not by the object of trust, but by the nature of the trust-relationships themselves. Luther's reason for this is that:

> the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and idol. If your faith and trust be right, then is your god also true; and, on the other hand, if your trust be false and wrong, then you have not the true God. . . .[141]

What distinguishes true from false faith?

The true faith, which alone has God as its "object" (so to speak), is an unconditional trust of the heart.[142] When good things occur, as well as when we suffer adversity including pain and death, these occurrences are opportunities to trust or cling with faith to the hidden good will of the God we cannot control. Only this unconditional trust can have God as its object, since it alone never establishes a known criterion for what creation and time can or may bring, if indeed we are to accept it as the creation not of our wills but of the will of a Creator. Only unconditional trust, therefore, can accept all existent realities from the hands of a God, rather than having to limit creation and time to what we can conceive or control. Unconditional trust discovers that "nothing can be in or about us and nothing can happen to us but what must be good and serviceable to us, as long as we believe (as we ought) that all things please God."[143] Without this unconditional nature of trust, the notion of a God who is trust-worthy would be irrelevant to our existence. We would still be trying to avoid or control the transcendence of existence, rather than accepting and responding to it in freedom.

The false faith which makes an "idol" is actually a form of distrust of what one cannot control. It is distrust of time, neighbor, and the tasks that pour in through the movements of life. Distrust is still a form of trust, since one trusts oneself, one's ideas and works. But it is a conditional trust, and never can be absolute. One can expose the conditional nature of false trust by asking "whether, when everything goes wrong with their life, their goods, their honor, their friends, or whatever they have, they still believe that their works are well-pleasing to God, and that God in his mercy ordains their sufferings and difficulties for them, whether they be small or great."[144] In conditional trust, many things are not seen as "good and serviceable to us," for we can only accept that as "good" which lets us fulfill our personal, social, economic, or moral goals. We cannot accept in trust those things which confront us with the inability of our activities to control life. False trust, whether in tangible objects or some ideals, is also conditional because it turns to despair when one does not possess these objects or does not live up to these ideals. When we possess our gods, we feel secure as though we were "sitting in the midst of Paradise." But once we lose possession or control, we are filled with doubts and despondency as though we "knew of no God."[145] In false trust, we are thus dependent on certain outer circumstances to occur; and, therefore, we are constantly only one step away from despondency about ourself or the universe. Necessarily this conditional trust cannot have the God of all of historical existence as its "object."

The two different ways of grounding the self--in a hidden good God, or in oneself and one's control--will bring about two different ways of interpreting or "seeing" existence. They will differ in how they view the transcendence of existence, and in how they interpret the role of human activity. In both of these areas, the interpretation of faith provides man with the freedom to respond without being preoccupied with himself. Therefore faith is the source of responsibility.

Since false faith puts its trust in what man can control, it is, as we saw, threatened by the transcendence, or uncontrollable dimension, of existence. It cannot accept the claims or demands that come by relational living, except in so far as they further one's own goals (which may be noble indeed). Faith, in contrast, sees "the Word of God and work of God in all that surrounds him [viz., man]."[146] The transcendence of existence is interpreted as the address of a trustworthy God.

Luther gives a good illustration of the difference between the interpretation of distrust and faith in showing how they view "the neighbor" --who is one of the clearest encounters with the transcendence of existence. Faith sees that the neighbor is worthy of my love because he is human. But this opinion of our trusting heart is easily altered, for

> such is the amazing craft of the devil that he is able not only to remove this noble object of love from my mind with great skill but even to persuade my heart of the exactly opposite opinion, so that it regards the neighbor as worthy, not of love but of bitterest hatred. He can accomplish this very easily, merely by suggesting to me: "Look, this man suffers from such and such a fault. He has chided you. He has done you damage." Immediately this most lovable of objects becomes vile, so that my neighbor no longer seems to be someone who should be loved but an enemy deserving bitter hatred.[147]

In this devlish act of re-interpreting the neighbor, certain features or actions of the neighbor become the criteria for whether or not he is worthy of my time and service. No longer do I accept him unconditionally, simply because I trust the Creator who placed him in my way. Now I have conditions for loving. Of course, there are many other ways -- besides this way, which we experience daily --in which we can view others in such a way that they no longer have a claim on us, if they do not fit into our plans. True faith alone accepts the neighbor as an unconditional call to service. The interpretation of trust provides the freedom to live for others.

Faith in God also differs from trust in oneself in how one assesses one's own works or activities. When our self is grounded in ourselves, we rely on our own actions or works to provide us with the good we seek and to establish our own worth and identity. Our actions are our means to make our individual or social living good. In Luther's terms, we use our works to gain our own "righteousness" before God, others, or ourselves. As a result we are not free to do the tasks which are at hand simply for their own sake and for the welfare of the neighbor. We are not free to do the inconspicuous and that which appears unimportant either to the public, or to our notion of God, or to our idea of what proves our own worth. All our best actions become a means to an end, rather than being an end in themselves. They are the means to establish some goal beyond the process of living in dialogue; or they are the means to enhance our trust in ourselves. Because our activities serve an ulterior purpose, they are not free to be truly responsive to the present. One has to make "distinctions" among the works, as we heard, to do those which are "good" according to one's idolized ideas. This means further that one is constantly battling against time. What time brings is, at best, another opportunity to move toward one's goal (worth, etc.), and, in other cases, a threat to what one has already established. What time brings threatens both the self-image one has created--e.g., my idea of myself as an impeccably moral person--and the tangible or ideal goods one has acquired to gain security.

Trust in one's works causes unfreedom. Luther refers to this trust in works as "works-righteousness." He contrasts it to the so-called "passive" or "original" righteousness of those who perform their duties free from self-concern.[148] Faith interprets the works one does in response to God's address, not as a means to earn God's (or anyone's) approval, but as the way of participating in God's good will toward man. Luther puts it this way:

> Thus a Christian man who lives in this [complete] confidence toward God knows all things, can do all things, ventures everything that needs to be done, and does everything gladly and willingly, not that he may gather merits and good works, but because it is a pleasure for him to please God in doing these things.[149]

There is very little "passivity" in this description of "passive" righteousness. The only "passivity" is that man does not try to prove himself before God and therefore is free to venture everything that needs to be done in life. He is free from self-centered choosing of what works are "good." Man is "passive" by accepting that his active existence--and his idling--is justified or righteous before God by the fact of being God's ongoing creation. The interpretation faith gives to one's works or all of active existence thus allows man to act freely and willingly without being threatened by time.

We can now see why for Luther faith is the teacher of good works and the source of responsibility. Not only does faith interpret the transcendence of existence as the address of a well-meaning God, thereby discovering his commands in all of existence. Faith also interprets one's active responses to these commands as an opportunity to express one's trust in God's good will by acting free from self-concern. Faith thus provides the freedom to focus on the neighbor and on the task at hand, rather than on some ulterior goal. Responsive and free existence in time is itself God's goal with us, present at every moment for faith.

We can conclude that the natural law of existence, no matter in what concrete commands it expresses itself to man, requires faith in a good God to be fulfilled. Authentic existence--as free and responsible--thus requires the reality of a Creator-God as the hidden source of the roles and demands of relational living.

Luther summarizes the relationship between faith in God and human responsibility in "The Large Catechism." He captures this relationship in the image of the first commandment of the Decalog being the context of all other commandments. The first commandment offers the promise of God's good will toward man, because it implies that "The Lord takes pleasure in those who have no other gods."[150] It is a promise of the goodness of the ungraspable God in contrast to the controllable gods the self chooses.[151] The promise comes to man as a command which requires "true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God, and clings to him alone."[152] This promise of a good God which can only be present as a challenge to trust--since trust alone "has" a god--"is to shine and impart its splendor to all the others [viz., commandments]."[153] Whether the commandments deal with our relationship to a hidden God or to our concrete neighbor, "everything is to proceed by virtue of the First Commandment."[154] Thus faith in the promise of the good will of God is the key to doing God's commands in existence. And by being the key to the human response, the perspective of faith is central to authentic humanness.

What, however, is the source of faith? How does man become aware of a well-meaning God as source and purpose of existence, so that he can interpret, and respond to, existence as God's creation and communication? The answer is found in intentional Christian communication.

B. Intentional Christian Communication

We have seen that there is a communication network between God and humans in which historical existence is the central agent. God communicates with humans by being clothed in creation, that is, in the historical realities that surround us. Humans respond to God by a faith which is incarnate in the works of one's vocations. Faith is not an intellectual belief, but a trust which leads to personal decisions and actions in the midst of the ambiguities of daily life. God is present as a promise of trustworthiness, as the hidden context of the mandate to serve one's neighbor in all one's roles. Human faith is present as the trust in the promise, as the willingness to look at life in terms of its hidden context.

The question we must now face is, How does faith happen? How does a person become aware of the hidden context, when all his senses can see or feel or intuit are ambiguous realities? How can one come to believe in a God who means me well, if he is hidden from any direct perception?

Faith, answers Luther using the words of Paul, comes from hearing the Word. In the somewhat stilted jargon of this dissertation, we can say that the source of faith is an intentional or explicit communication of God which witnesses to his presence in creation. Created realities are God's words--_implicitly_. They can only be "heard" as words by the person who looks at life from the perspective of faith. And the perspective of faith can only arise when the promise of God's well-meaning presence is expressed _explicitly_ (in words or symbolic actions). A first task of this section, therefore, will be to unfold the role of explicit communications of God (see below: "1. Intentional Communication as the Source of Faith").

A second question immediately presents itself when we describe the source of faith some explicit or revelatory presence of God in "the Word" (which term is Luther's shorthand for any form of revelation). We must ask, Is God's presence in the Word an unveiling of the hidden God? Does revelation necessarily imply direct communication which overcomes the indirect communication of God's clothed presence in creation?

Luther answers with a clear No! The Word is also a clothed presence of God, which can be seen most clearly in Jesus as the _incarnate_ Word. Only a clothed presence, a language embodied in daily reality can enable people to look at their own lives as the ongoing address of God. An unveiling of divine secrets or a revelation of spiritual knowledge could not accomplish the task of creating an embodied faith. A second purpose of this section, therefore, will be to describe the form intentional or revelatory communication of God must have to be the source of an incarnate faith (see below: "2. The Indirect Nature of Christian Communication").

Before we tackle these two tasks, I want to briefly alert the reader to the theological and methodological insight that is hidden in the fact that we are dealing with "revelation" or "the Word" in the chapter on created or authentic human existence. Our initial discussion of "revelation" precedes any reference to sin and the perspective of sin. The Word, God's revelatory presence, is, according to Luther necessary for authentic, trusting humanness. It is necessary because of *the nature of the human creature*, not only because of the destruction of man's nature in sin. Sin modifies the way the Word (as Word incarnate) functions, in so far as trust in God can now only be created by a reversal from the sinful perspective on life.

The theological insight is clearly documented in Luther. I am only drawing out the methodological conclusion when I discuss "the Word" before "sin." Luther states explicitly that "even if his nature had remained perfect, Adam, together with his descendants, would have lived in (Word and) faith. . . ."[155] The need of the Word and of faith (rather than direct knowing or seeing of God) is not created by sin. Human nature demands the Word. The Word has a role in the creation of man--and, after sin, in his re-creation.

That the creation of man and of an historical world is the context for understanding Luther's notion of the Word must be stressed particularly to "Lutherans." Lutheran Orthodoxy has immediately identified the Word of God with Scripture, so that there is only a teaching on Scripture and not a distinctive teaching of the Word.[156] Those, on the other hand, who rely on the Lutheran confessional writings, also will find it difficult to uncover Luther's notion of the Word. As Iwand puts it:

> It is difficult to gain the concept of the Word of God *per se* from the Lutheran Confessions, because this concept of the Word of God is not in them. The Confessions immediately begin with the contrast of Law and Gospel when they speak of the Word of God.[157]

Thus Lutheran confessional writings differ from Luther in that they begin theologically with "sin," rather than "creation" when they deal with the role and nature of Christian communication.

1. Intentional Communication as the Source of Faith

The key to human freedom and responsibility is that man trusts in a well-meaning God as the source of existence and its demands. How does faith in this source of life arise, since, as we heard, man has no direct perception of God, nor a mediated knowledge of the divine as a substrate of nature? Existence is thoroughly creaturely and full of ambiguity, adversity, suffering, and death. Existence is a mixutre of human use and abuse of the created orders. For us to be able to "view" existence as the presence of the gracious will or "the light" of God (in the imagery of John 1:1-14), this gracious presence must be "pointed out and preached," says Luther.[158] The God who is present "clothed in creation" must be brought into "language," if his presence is to affect us, not only unconsciously or unawares through the structures of existence, but in our conscious way of responding to existence. The awareness of a good God in our present world does not come by some immediate illumination of the heart by God's Spirit or by some inner word welling up in us.[159] Rather it is by means of normal human words, which we receive by hearing (or reading) "physically and outwardly," that this way of seeing reality comes to us.[160] This possibility for interpreting existence also comes from such physical and outward acts as those of the sacraments, in so far as they intentionally signify the presence of God. When I speak of God being brought into "language," I therefore refer not only to words but to any significatory acts or events which intentionally communicate God's presence. Luther's shorthand for all forms of intentional communication is "the (spoken) Word"--as distinct from "the (uncreated) Word" in existence. The sacraments, Christ, and teaching or preaching are all the intentional Word of God to man.[161] At present we are not exploring the nature of this religious "language" as a certain kind of presence of God. Our concern is to note that we need religious "language" or the Word to be able to put our trust in a Creator-God. Against those who claim immediate knowledge of God, Luther says the previously quoted statement: "Set aside the word 'God created the heavens and the earth' [Gen. 1:1], and I would like to see who would have a God or of what use he would be."[162] Of course, God would still be "physically" present through creation and therefore be useful to "the body"--and, we can add, to the whole "outer man." Even if we have no personal or existential knowledge of God, he remains the Creator who preserves and governs natural and social existence. Yet this presence is of no use to "the heart" and "inner man," since he would not be the hermeneutic key to man's way of understanding (and experiencing) his life. It is only when "God's Word is added" to his presence for "the body" that "the heart uses the Word and partakes spiritually of precisely that in the Word of which the body makes use and partakes outwardly and physically."[163] It is not God's "physical" presence in the created, but "the Word," which feeds "the heart" spiritually, i.e., inspires faith. Faith comes from hearing the Word. "*Fides ex auditu*, is the unalterable rule," says Bornkamm to summarize Luther's ideas on the importance of the intentional Word.[164]

The purpose of the Word is "to instill confidence in the heart."[165] This is synonymous with saying that the role of intentional communication is to *create* a self or spirit which grounds itself not in man but in the hidden God. (And if man has lost this authentic self, the Word performs a "new work of creation" by again creating a person who trusts God.)[166]

The spoken Word thus is necessary to complete the creation of the human being who is not only body and soul, but also "spirit." All works of intentional communication, no matter who carries them out, are, therefore, "works of the Divine Majesty."[167] The Word brings about this creation of the human individual or responsible self by making God "there for me." The focus of the Word is always the individual so that he can ground his self in a God who is not well-meaning in general, but who means him well.[168] How can an individual grasp that God is there for him? Luther answers as follows:

> He is there for you when he adds his Word [to his presence in creation] and binds himself, saying, "Here you are to find me." Now when you have the Word, you can grasp and have him with certainty and say, "Here I have thee, according to thy Word."[169]

The Word announces God's goodness toward me as a personal address. I can now have this Word as the basis of my trust in the invisible God. I can cling to this Word even against my experience of such things as adversity and suffering--and, after the fact of sin, against an accusing conscience.[170] The Word gives me a certainty of God's intentions towards me which I can never gain from ambiguous existence itself.

The Word, as a concrete presence of God's good will, is the means by which a self can put its trust in what lies outside of us. Theological communication "snatches us away from ourselves and places us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on what is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot be deceived."[171] If we trust the Word, we no longer put our trust in our own ideas, experience, or works which we seemingly can control. Our source of identity and worth is "outside of ourselves" in the Word, or in God's will. If the Word were merely a different idea than our ideas of what is good and worthwhile, it could not ground our self in what is beyond our control. We would still be those who implement the idea by trusting in our works. But the Word is "promise." It is concrete as a basis for trust. Yet it "only" announces or promises God's good will toward us without presenting God's will as some knowable, timeless idea. What we will become depends on what God gives in time; but we can trust the promise that the hidden will is good.

We conclude that the role of intentional Christian communication is to create man's inner self by inspiring trust in a well-meaning God. Intentional communication is necessary as a basis for this god-relationship of the self, since the present God remains hidden to any observation and can only be existentially relevant as a "God for me."

What, however, is the form or nature of the Word or intentional communication, if it is to enable us to trust God's goodness? How does the Word carry out its role?

2. The Indirect Nature of Christian Communication

Because humans are God's creatures in time and space, they can have no direct perception or knowledge of God, as we heard. This epistemological principle applies also to the "spiritual dimension" of man or to the realm of man's "inner" god-relationship. To become present for both outer and inner man, God "covers," "veils" or "clothes" himself not only in the works of creation but also in his Word and his significatory works.[172] God is clothed in the Word, not to hide himself--except from direct or mediated knowing--, but to "show Himself to us."[173] To unfold Luther's image of God clothed in the Word, we must look at both (a) the concreteness of God's presence and (b) the indirectness of his presence.

a. The concreteness of God's significatory presence

Just as God is clothed in family and state "governments" to create and preserve man as social creature, so he is clothed in "the church" or "spiritual government" to continually create and preserve the trusting "inner man." The spiritual government is a "Word"-order of existence from the beginning of time, belonging to the realm of the created just as much as the worldly governments of family and state.[174] In both the spiritual and worldly types of government, God carries out his ongoing work of creation through humans and their activities as his "masks" or "faces." While the creation of man's responsible self by works of intentional communication is clearly an activity of the Divine Majesty, these same works "are given to human beings and are done through the Word which humans teach."[175] It is in normal human language and significatory actions that God becomes present for the inner man and spiritually governs his heart. God is present in created forms of signifying his good will to man so that man does not have to transcend the created at any point. Nor does man have to seek a knowledge of God beyond what is present in the concrete "Word-order" of existence. In Toernvall's words, "The spiritual regiment is . . . instituted, so that man does not have to search for anything beyond it. In the preached Word he has everything he needs [viz., for knowing God and relating to him]."[176]

All religions in various times and cultures are "good creatures of God"[177] or created and temporal masks by which God intends spiritually to govern the world. Luther explicitly remarks that the difference between Christians and Gentiles is not "that the Gentiles were simply despisers of honesty and religion." Rather, "all the nations scattered all over the world had their own laws, worship, and religion, without which the human race cannot be governed. . . ."[178] The existence of religions all over the world is a clear sign that spiritual government is an order of existence from the beginning. For Luther the basic contention between Christianity and other religions is never between the various culturally conditioned forms of worship. His concern is whether a religion fulfills its God-ordained role or whether it is abused for human aims. As we shall see later, the role of Christ is not to found a new religion and new forms of worship, but to restore true religion. His task is to expose the prevalent abuse of religion and to lead to its proper use. The purpose of all religions as an order of creation is to create faith and responsibility by intentionally communicating the good will of the ungraspable God. "The Word"--which is a synonym for expressing God's good will toward man[179]--is, therefore, the basic function which constitutes religion or spiritual government.[180] For example in lecturing on the institution of the Sabbath, Luther says, "On the seventh day He [viz., God] wanted men to busy themselves both with His Word and with other forms of worship established by Him, so that we might give first thought to the fact that this nature was created chiefly for acknowledging and glorifying God."[181] Religion makes us aware that we exist before a good God.

Religion is abused and cannot fulfill its role, if it is used by man to control God's will toward us or to idolize any given religious or secular order of existence. Where any religion, including Christianity, is used as a way to earn God's favor by our worldly or religious works it is abused egocentrically. Then there is, as Luther puts it,

> . . . no difference at all between a papist, a Jew, a Turk, or a sectarian. Their persons, locations, rituals, religions, works, and forms of worship are, of course, diverse; but they all have the same reason, the same heart, the same opinion and idea.[182]

True religion is only present where the heart trusts God's goodness unconditionally rather than putting its trust in its own ideas and works. Thus where "the Word" creates true faith in God, there is authentic religion, regardless of its forms of worship, locations or rituals. There the spiritual order of creation is used properly.

The words, rituals, sacraments, and acts by which the spiritual government signifies God's will toward humans are not mere signs of something beyond. Expressed in the imagery of spatial language, God is present not in a separate realm called "heaven," but "in" the sacraments--though not in a crude and visible manner.[183] Similarly God has bound himself to "the Word" or "the humanity of Christ" so that he can be grasped by humans.[184] He is concretely present in all these forms of signification so that man can as individual "have" him with a certainty as the basis of personal trust. God is truly present for the inner man in these created coverings as his "faces." For Luther all religious "language" or signification is that of performative signs (wirkende Zeichen) or of "symbols" "which do not only paint a distant reality, but presently carry it in them."[185] On the one hand, we heard that man or the human heart has no access to the reality of God except by means of the physical and outward words they hear with their ears, or the physical elements of the sacraments which they eat with their mouth at the same time as they hear that these elements are God's presence for them. On the other hand, this created mediation of God's reality is not a lamentable limit, since by means of these "physical" words and acts God can enter the human heart and become the "object" of trust, or better: the one who is present in this trust.[186] The God-man relationship is thus truly established and maintained by "the Word," since in this Word God faces and addresses us. Whether God offers us his good will before sin, or pronounces us forgiven after sin, we have this will or forgiveness with certainty once we accept and grasp "the Word."

We conclude: This "inner man" does not have, nor need, any other access to God than that of the significatory order of creation called "spiritual government." In its various acts and words, God truly faces man and therefore man's heart can put its trust in him.

b. The indirectness of God's Word-presence

While the Word is a concrete presence of God and the words or acts are "performative," this does not mean that spiritual government is a direct or compelling presence of God. Whereas the government of the state requires laws and law-enforcement to maintain order and to gain outward obedience, the spiritual regiment rules only by a "weak" or non-compelling Word. Luther does not cease to marvel that God carries out his rule over people by means of the Word. His explicit governing of people--in contrast to his implicit governing of man as social creature by state and home--occurs in a "realm of listening," a Hoerreich.[187] It is by means of a word which can be--and most frequently is--ignored[188] that God creates faith and with it the responsiveness that carries out his will in the world. Any stronger or more compelling means to assert his rule over people than a "mere" word would destroy what God is trying to create: namely, trust. This is the "weakness" of all religious communication given by its very aim: it can never be a guaranteed technique for creating trust in God. Its "promise" is, however, that only by "language" with its weakness can the aim be accomplished and people begin to live in trusting responses to life.

The Word, whose aim is to show or reveal God to us, is indirect communication not only because of its non-compelling nature, but also because this revealing is not an un-veiling of God, but a clothing of God. The Word does not uncover eternal or divine information for us. Nor does it allow us to see or feel God. The "revealing" Word is a witness. It announces that existence is the address of the invisible God, rather than trying to demonstrate this to human reason.[189] "The Word is," as Luther expresses it often, ". . . not ostensio praesentium, sed testimonium non apparentium, not demonstration of something at hand (Aufweis), but testimony to something invisible (Hinweis)."[190] Luther explains the nature of witness or testimony in contrast to "demonstration" as follows:

> Now it is the nature of the witness that it speaks of what one does not see, know or feel; rather one has to believe the witness who testifies to it.[191]

Rather than allowing man to know or feel the reality of God's presence in creation, the word of witness requires that its announcement be believed. Only faith can understand the reality of religious communication. It is for this reason that "the Word," in spite of being a concrete presence of God, is indirect communication. This indirect nature of "the Word" is the communicational counterpart to the anthropological insight that only unconditional faith has a true god. God is only present for those who relate to him in faith.

Indirect communication necessarily aims at an embodied faith, since the witness to God's presence cannot be divorced from concrete existence and its demands. The Word is always a call to respond to concrete existence. Luther expresses this interconnection between witness and concrete reality when he says, "You find no word of God in the entire Scripture in which something material and outward is not contained and presented."[192] This statement means that the Word always binds our faith to something concrete in time.[193] For example, civil government is "an outward thing" which is "embraced in God's Word and must be believed to be God's ordinance, Romans 13 (:1ff.)."[194] Even if the Word presents us with bread and wine of the sacrament as the "outward thing," to accept it as concrete expression of God's will toward us entails a re-assessment of our whole existence in the light of this well-meaning God.[195] No matter what specific "outward thing" the Word contains or "frames" (einfasse), it always functions to confront us with our daily existence as the address of a good God in all its orders. The Word which witnesses to God's present good-will must, therefore, always articulate the mandate or concrete commands of existence. We are not asked to believe or trust God in a vacuum, but to trust that the works that pour in on us, and all the demands on us, are "good and serviceable" to us. Thus religious communication of God is always moral communication: calling us to respond to existence and its natural law.

That this religious-moral communication deals with a faith embodied in daily living becomes fully apparent when we consider that the perspective the Word gives of daily life as God's address is only understood and accepted as one actually interacts with the givens of life on the basis of this way of "seeing." While, as we saw, there is no decisive outward expression for trusting action, one nevertheless does not trust unless one responds actively to each new moment as a new address and call to faith and responsibility.

In sum: Intentional Christian communication must be indirect communication, because the role of it is to create faith--and responsibility. Indirect communication is not "indirect" by any lack of concreteness in expressing God's mandate and its context of promise. The "indirectness" comes from the fact that the intentional address of God cannot be understood except as one responds to existence as God's communication. The responses cannot be prescribed nor compelled but must be made freely as an act of faith and trust.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD-VIEW OF SIN

Since the relationship between God and man is that of indirect communication, the relationship is not only marked by human freedom and responsibility, but also by an inherent danger to the relationship. Man is free not to view his life as the address of a well-meaning God. He therefore can easily cease to respond to existence in trust. He can sever his relationship to God--and as a consequence to the neighbor--by seeing, and responding to, life egocentrically. The ego and its ideas of the good, rather than the hidden God, become the hermeneutic key to understanding existence. This is the world-view of sin.

For Luther, sin is a universal *possibility*. Everyone is confronted with the possibility of putting his trust in himself (his ideas and works) and of desiring to control life and time, rather than accepting whatever comes as God's address. Every new circumstance and moment confronts us with the possibility that we see it from the perspective of distrust rather than faith. Sin is also an universal *actuality*, according to Luther. Everyone has succumbed to the temptation of seeing, and responding to, some situation or concrete command egocentrically. However, sin is *not* a universal *necessity*--in the sense of there being some necessary cause for sin ontologically or developmentally. Man does not have to go through sin to reach full authenticity, as if sin were a negative but necessary pedagogue. The claim that sin is "necessary" is rather characteristic of those who try to escape personal responsibility for their sin. Typically, says Luther, "the sinful person would rather accuse God [and the structures and circumstances of human existence created by God] than to acknowledge his own sin."[1] The verification of the universal actuality of sin which makes all men sinners can, therefore, not be given logically or by demonstration, but only existentially. The verification is personally given when one asks oneself, Do I live in full confidence before God in all my doing and suffering or do I experience anxiety about the transcendence of existence and anxiety about responsibility? (An added difficulty for verifying the universal actuality of sin lies in the fact that, as we shall see, it is the nature of sin to hide its presence from man's awareness unless it is revealed through the grace of God.)

In this chapter we will unfold the world-view of sin which is universally possible and actual by looking at (A) the egocentric way of seeing existence, (B) the egocentric way of responding to existence, and (C) the hidden nature of sin.

A. The Egocentric Way of Seeing Existence

Sin is, for Luther, the alternative way of grounding the self, and of viewing existence, to that of faith. As we have heard, there are only two basic types of grounding the self and of interpreting existence for Luther. Either the heart puts its unconditional trust in an uncontrollable Creator and one interprets existence as good creation. Or the heart puts its trust in one's own ideas and works thereby interpreting existence as something man has to make good or something that threatens his sought-for good. The change or "Fall" from faith to sin or from trust to distrust brings about the corruption of authentic human nature, though not of man's bodily parts or ontological structure.[2] Man loses his nature as a free and responsible being.

Luther gives a clear development of his concept of "sin" and of how sin arises in his retelling of the Genesis-account of the Fall in his Lectures on Genesis, chapter 3. The temptation to forsake the view of faith and the subsequent Fall from trust are described, in terms of Adam and Eve, as the paradigm of "every temptation."[3] The story of Adam, Eve, the fruit of a forbidden tree and a tempting snake can only be an elucidation of the present possibility and actuality of sin, because "to the careful reader it readily becomes clear that the bite of the apple is not the reason" for the "pitiable corruption of human nature" which follows the act.[4] The focus of the story is not on "the fruit that was plucked and swallowed." If eating a certain fruit were the key to mankind's present sin and the loss of authentic human nature then one will either laugh with the Epicureans "at this [story] as a fairy tale," or, if one takes it seriously, one will hate God and despair because of his seeming pettiness.[5] The focus of the story is on man's response to a concrete command of God in time. The issue is man's changing response to God's Word and good-will which always comes in concrete mandates to act. For Adam and Eve, the commandment not to eat from the tree was their concrete confrontation with a challenge to trust God's goodness and obey him. This Word was Law and Gospel to them. It was their worship and obedience in the state of innocence.[6] The story and the concrete command can be a paradigm for everyman's way to fall out of trust, because it deals with the Word-faith relationship between God and man.[7] To refuse to accept the concrete command by faith in God's good intentions and to refuse to fulfill the command are the ways one breaks the God-relationship of the self which is constituted by Word and faith. This break and one's subsequent reorientation in life is "sin."

Temptation or the possibility for man to sin does not lie in some slumbering evil desires or bad inclinations which some "temptor" or "tempting circumstances" awaken and arouse. In such a view of temptation, existence and its structures would be a mixture of so-called good and evil parts or tendencies or emotions. Under certain conditions these bad tendencies would become actual, virtually out of necessity. For Luther, the possibility of sin does not lie in the ontological structures of existence, but in man's possibility to interpret existence other than as the address of a good God. Temptation is to be driven away from the Word by another word. The breaking of a concrete commandment or the ignoring of the natural law of love is a consequence of this re-interpretation. Luther illustrates this progression of temptation from "another word" to deed with the case of Eve. He states,

> . . . it is stupid to think . . . that when Eve looked at the tree, she gradually became inflamed with a desire to pick the fruit, until at last, overcome by her desire, she brought the fruit to her mouth. For the chief temptation was to listen to another word and to depart from the one which God had previously spoken. . . .[8]

Before looking at what distinguishes this "other word" from the Word of God, we must note that it is indeed a normal human "word" (or significatory act) just as much as God's "Word" is. The word which draws us away from existence as God's address is no more magical or directly compelling than the witness to God. Our relationship to existence always is mediated by some "language" or words whose only power lie in their interpretation of reality. Luther remarks that when man hears the temptor's discourse, he has the possibility to say, "'Shut up! The Lord's command was different'."[9] Neither fellow humans nor serpents and the devil have any direct control over how a person will receive their representations or distortions of existence, of others and of God.

The "other word" is not necessarily distinct from the Word which represents existence as God's communication in terms of outward form nor in terms of the topics it deals with. If a person as yet lives within both the worldly and the spiritual orders of creation, temptation must take the form of the ministry of the word in order to have any chance of success. Luther puts it this way:

> . . . Satan imitates God. Just as God had preached to Adam, so he himself also preaches to Eve. What the proverb says is true: "Every evil begins in the name of the Lord."[10]

Not only the outward form of the "other word" can be similar to the Word, but also the content. Luther notes that the content of the tempting word can easily be religious and moral instruction. He says,

> If Satan were to teach that people ought to kill, commit fornication, and disobey their parents, who would not realize that he is suggesting something that is forbidden by the Lord? . . . But here, when he propounds another word, when he discourses about the will of God, when he uses the names "god," "the church," and "the people of God" as a pretext, then people cannot so readily be on guard against him.[11]

If the outward form and apparent content do not distinguish the "other word" from God's Word, how are they distinct? They have a different inner form or way of communicating which implies a whole different way of relating existence, man, and God to one another. God's Word--in whatever concrete commands it comes--addresses an individual and calls for faith and obedience. It is indirect communication which can only be understood when one believes and acts. A faith-relationship to God is therefore included in every commandment.[12] Man is spoken to as a creature of God and not as an autonomous self. In Satan's communication with Eve--about religious and moral issues--, we can see the different nature of communication employed. Luther captures the central difference in the following words:

> . . . uncorrupted nature, which had the true knowledge of God, nevertheless had a Word or command which was beyond Adam's understanding and had to be believed. . . . Since the devil sees this and knows

> that this command is beyond the understanding of the human being, he tempts Eve so that she herself may proceed to ponder whether this is God's command and will or not. This is the main part of every temptation, when reason tries to reach a decision about the Word and God on its own without the Word.[13]

The basic shift is from a communication which aims at and requires faith to a communication which aims at objective knowledge of God's eternal will. Although man is encouraged to be self-active in "pondering on his own," he is not involved in indirect communication but in a search for knowledge. Rather than addressing man with God's will and calling for the self-activity of a free and willing response, Satan gets a discussion under way about God's will and how one can discern it independently of faith and action.[14]

In this knowledge-approach to the religious and moral, man is tempted to move "beyond" believing to knowing. This temptation is present, for example, whenever humans or societies try to attribute divinity or eternal value to any temporal order of society or church or when they try to identify any concrete body of civil and moral laws as the objective will of God.[15] The same temptation is present when people desire direct "emotional knowledge" of God's presence or of the spiritual usefulness of certain acts and objects.

Luther saw "fanatics" and spiritualists succumb to this temptation in their approach to the created elements of the sacraments. Because they could not directly feel or rationally deduce a spiritual usefulness of the Lord's Supper, for instance, they denied any spiritual value to it. Or they denied it as God's "real" presence. Luther criticizes this desire for direct (emotional) knowledge of God by saying, "They [viz.,the fanatics] would like to grope and feel for something [viz., spiritual usefulness] in order to escape having to believe. . . ."[16] The Word of God, as indirect communication, gives us the wisdom of a trusting and responsive heart. It is characteristic of the devil's temptation that "he would make us wise against and above the Word of God. . . ."[17] He offers the wisdom of gaining direct knowledge of the essence of God's will.

The movement from believing to knowing, if man accepts it, marks a complete change in one's view of one's relationship to existence, since it is an exchange of the faith-view of existence with the ego-centric view of distrust.[18] One only begins to search out direct knowledge of God in thought or feeling if one wants to escape having to believe. It is only when man begins to distrust that whatever happens to us or is demanded of us in relational existence is "good and serviceable to us" that he will proceed to ponder whether this particular neighbor or this particular task is truly God's command or if it is really good for him. As soon as man begins to distrust the goodness of the hidden source of existence, he will resent the uncontrollable nature of existence. As a result, man will allow himself to be addressed--by a temptor--as an autonomous self whose autonomous reason or feeling can discern what is ultimately good for the self. It is some timeless idea of good and evil which gives man a sense of security and control in face of the changing created and temporal world with its demands. Distrust replaces the "borrowed goodness" of a life of faith with the knowable goodness of an idea of life.

The use of a knowledge-approach in the realm of religion and morality is not only inadequate because it cannot express ongoing God-man communication in time. It is inadequate because its basis and seductive power is the illusion of human autonomy and control. The autonomous man does not have to continually be dependent on, and responsive to, the divine address of the concrete in time. Direct communication in religious and moral issues is a satanic temptation to sin, since it has the human heart shift its trust away from the uncontrollable God of all existence to one's own (autonomous) self. Man is encouraged to put his trust in his own idea of God or of the good. And man is encouraged to put his trust in his own works and activities for actualizing and creating the ideally conceived good.[19] Man sets his self up as an idol--even when he calls his ultimate known good "God."[20] The Fall that occurs in replacing indirect with direct communication is nothing less than putting man in the place of God as the source of his own goodness. This is sin: to usurp God's role and to begin to create an egocentric world.

In sum: to draw away from the Word (which promises God's good will) to "another word" (which provides ultimate knowledge) is to exchange faith in God with trust in oneself. Since the self now is grounded in itself, the result will be an egocentric way of seeing and responding to existence.

We now turn to consider the egocentric world which the self creates and in which it finds itself, once it has fallen from faith to distrust.

B. The Egocentric World of Sin

In authentic existence, it is God's Word of promise and the natural law of relational existence which determines what man and the world become in time. The becoming of man and world, while using free and responsive human activity, is truly God's creation. It is God's will which is actualized in human freedom and responsibility, since both are responses to the created orders in time. The key to human responsiveness is the god-relationship of the inner man. It is a god-relationship of unconditional trust which places man (and his becoming) outside of himself in the hidden God. It is this trusting type of god-relationship which alone can see and fulfill the natural law of relational existence.

Since trust in God is the key to responsive living, it is easily understandable how Luther can claim that the temptation to withdraw from the Word in distrust "is the sum of all temptations; it brings with it the overthrow or the violation of the entire Decalogue [viz., the intentional communication of the natural law of existence]."[21] Distrust creates a different type of god-relationship. It is a god-relationship in which man projects, and judges himself by, a timeless idea of the good as that which mediates "God" or the ultimate to him. This "known idea of the good" unfolded in specific demands or "laws" is satisfied by the self by "working." Where "trusting" is replaced by "knowing laws" and "working," the self is putting its trust in its own ideas and works. It is man's ideas and will which determine what man and the world shall become. They also make man and the world "good" according to this idea. Man becomes the creator of himself and of the world choosing his own "good" works--in contrast to being responsive to what time gives. Man's self-chosen works replace the natural law of relational existence as the imperative under which man lives, once trusting is replaced by working.

To unfold this shift of seeing and doing, we must look at (1) the god-relationship of distrust and (2) the self-chosen works of distrust.

1. The God-Relationship of Distrust

Luther observed and studied the phenomenon that distrust will create a new "inner man" (taken phenomenologically) characterized by a type of god-relationship different from the trusting inner man. His studies occurred for the most part within the "religious" society of his time. It is in this context that he discovered that people who distrust God's promised good-will "must invent a form for God that does not exist anywhere,"[22] namely, a "God" who is mediated to man by "the Law." Doing the works of the Law becomes man's way of controlling (or earning) God's grace and favor. The elements of this god-relationship of distrust are, however, not only present within religious societies and people. Since everyman must put his trust in some god,[23] the distrust of the hidden God will necessarily lead to the invention of a new god, to some "legal mediation" of this god to man, and to "working" as man's way of gaining the approval of this new god. We will attempt to uncover the general phenomenon by tracing these three elements of the new god-relationship as they appear within Luther's religious context.

Inventing a new god. In the Treatise on Good Works, Luther exposes the false image of God that the religious society of his time had created when they stressed that the fulfillment of prescribed "good works" assures God's favor. Luther calls those who teach prescribed "good works"--rather than teaching faith as the chief "good work" and faith as the teacher of what works are "good"--false prophets in sheep's clothing. They seem to be concerned about God and responsibility, but are, in fact, inventing a different god. Luther describes the "false prophets" as those

> . . . who want to make God favorably disposed to them and want to buy God's grace directly from him with their many good works (as they call them), as if God were a huckster or a journeyman who did not want to grant his grace and favor for nothing.[24]

The "God" they are projecting is one whose favor is not given by the fact of them being his creatures, but whose favor can and must be earned by specific good works. He is a "huckster" or merchant-god who sets his price in the form of specific demands which must be met. This "God" cannot be the object of unconditional trust, since, when the demands are not met, he necessarily witholds his favor or punishes the delinquent. As a result, the defaulting individual will flee from this "God" when adversity and suffering (outwardly or in the conscience) convince the individual that God is punishing him. Luther puts it this way:

> All the holy hypocrites do just the same when they come up against it [viz., suffering and adversity]. They do not run to God, but flee from him and away from him, and think only how they may get rid of their trouble through their own efforts or through the help of other men.[25]

Whether people are trying to purchase God's favor or are trying to flee what they perceive as the wrath of God, they are putting their ultimate trust in their own efforts and not in God. Their "God" is thus just an invention which endorses their attempts to control their own destiny.

The remarkable insight of Luther is that wherever religion is misused, people will invent this kind of a merchant-god. The role of properly used religion was to help man to perceive and receive the good-will of God which is expressed in creation and time. Its purpose is to evoke unconditional trust. Wherever this does not occur, but rather man tries to control nonmastered existence, there a substitute "god" or "ultimate" with its demands will replace the hidden God. There may be many variations; but the basic form of the new god is one whose approval is dependent on the fulfillment of specified laws, rituals or works. Distrust of the uncontrollable always creates a controllable center of meaning and identity. In a passage which was previously quoted in part, Luther expresses that the withdrawal from the God of faith leads to a "God" of law as follows:

> . . . there is no difference at all between a papist, a Jew, a Turk,

> or a sectarian. Their persons, locations, rituals, religions, works, and forms of worship are, of course, diverse; but they all have the same reason, the same heart, the same opinion and idea. The Turk thinks the very same as the Carthusian, namely, "If I do this or that, I have a God who is favorably disposed toward me; if I do not, I have a God who is wrathful." There is no middle ground between human working and the knowledge of Christ [viz., between trust in one's works and believing the grace of God manifested in Christ]; if this knowledge is obscured, it does not matter whether you become a monk or heathen afterwards.[26]

The outward differences between various religions and cultures become irrelevant when there is this inner common opinion, idea, or disposition of the heart, namely, that one's worth and identity are dependent on one's actions or "works." This common idea also breaks down any decisive distinction between those who consider themselves religious and those who do not. Both groups will project some "god" whose approval is dependent on human working. The non-religious will not call their ultimate reality "god"--nor its demands the law of God. They may be openly or unconsciously putting their trust in money, honor, wisdom as the ultimate good.[27] However, they will be only able to accept themselves (and not despair in life) when they acquire this known good. They must live up to their self-image as being wealthy, honorable, or wise, etc., otherwise their conscience--which is controlled by the projected idol--will punish them. Similarly when a "religious" person projects a "God" who rewards certain religious or moral actions, he is in fact trying to "satisfy his own need to regard himself as fine and holy and religious"--to use Wingren's words.[28] Both groups believe, If I do this . . ., I will be acceptable. Therefore both have invented a merchant, or lawyer-god, even if the specific ideas and definitions of what this "god" demands are as diverse as "moral behavior" and "personal business success." In sum: the new god is always a god whose approval is conditional to human actions.

The mediation of "the Law." The invention of a new god as a determinant of one's god-relationship always implies the fall from "grace" into "the Law" as that which mediates the "God" to man. A "God" whose approval of man is conditional must be graspable in a body of spelled-out conditions. These conditions are the legal norm which "God" guarantees as valid for all times. And man can measure his own worth or acceptability by means of his compliance to this definite and timeless standard. "God's will" cannot be mediated to man by the imperative of changing relational existence and the Word of promise, but rather must be available as a known law (or prescription of "good works"). In Luther's religious society, "the Law" which supposedly defined God's objective will was most ofen taken to be the biblically recorded "Law of Moses," although the religious rules or "laws" or "the pope" or the church were often also accorded a divine status. For Luther, as we shall see in discussing "the theological use of the Law," this use of "the Law of Moses" as an objective moral code that defines God's will is a misuse--its original purpose being "theological," namely, to reveal man's escape from responsibility. The misuse is, however, only one variation of the constant temptation to fix some specified order or law as the eternal will of God, as we heard. For Luther, there is, therefore, no basic difference whether "the Law of Moses," the laws of the pope, or any other moral, civil, or ecclesiastical laws become the mediator between "God" and man. In all cases, man is dealing with a false fiction of God, namely, a lawyer-god whose will can be objectified in a "Law." Luther expresses the basic issue which is at stake when one uses "the Law" rather than the Word of grace to mediate God to man as follows:

> For someone who falls away from grace into the Law is no better off in his fall than someone apart from grace who falls into idolatry. Apart from Christ [viz., the concrete communication of God's grace] there is nothing but sheer idolatry, an idol and a false fiction about God, whether it is called the Law of Moses or the law of the pope or the Koran of the Turk.[29]

To use any "law" to mediate God and man is to be involved in inventing one's own God. We can extrapolate from this that even the customs and patterns of secular society, the "demands of the market," or any prescription of demands arising from some self-chosen idol or ideology can function as "the law" by which we measure our worth and acceptability. Any ideal self-image is mediated to man by a body of "objectives" or personal sub-goals which must be reached if one is to move toward one's ideal or ultimate goal. Thus what appears as a religious phenomenon of measuring one's worth by some moral or religious laws, is fundamentally the common human phenomenon of having one's actions and worth be determined by some ideal or specific self-image.

In sum: when man makes his worth conditional to a certain performance or achievement, he will establish some "timeless" or supposedly "objective" (or personal) norm by which to measure his performance and assess his worth. Rather than assessing himself according to the Word of unconditional grace, man assesses himself according to some known law or standard.

Working as a means of relating to one's "God." The implication of inventing a new god and of falling into "the Law" is that man desires to--and later has to--depend on his own works or efforts to gain approval from whatever god he worships. Man relies on his own works to gain control of his destiny, as we just heard. But once man enters this whole legal universe of a lawyer-god mediated to man by "laws," he also has to keep on working. Otherwise his conscience--or the "laws" which control the conscience--will punish man. Man will be confronted with the withdrawal of approval from his "god"--whether he conceives of his "god" as "God," the opinions of society, or a personal self-image. In the legal god-relationship of sin, trusting is replaced by working.[30] Or, we can say, faith in God's good-will as the source of all "good" works is replaced by prescribed good works as man's means to earn God's favor.[31] Or again: rather than receiving his righteousness or the justification of existence by faith in the God who created him to be an active and responsive being, man now uses his activity or "works" to create and prove his righteousness.[32] In authentic existence, man also "worked." But his "works" were a part of his social relationships, focusing only on the neighbor and his welfare. In sinful existence, this "working" is used to establish and maintain one's god-relationship. Wingren captures the shifting role of "works" in the following phrase: "Separated from God, man does works which have God as their focus, not one's neighbor."[33] To make this statement more precise, it should be added that in this legal god-relationship, man is not working for the honor and glory of God, but to gain "our own self-approval and . . . (to seek) our own honor."[34] Man is working to justify himself and not to honor God. All his works serve to establish himself as the creator of his own worth.

We can summarize the fundamental change in one's god-relationship that comes about when one ceases to trust God's graciousness in the following words of Luther;

> . . . if we . . . do not believe that God is gracious to us and pleased with us, or if we presume to please him first and foremost by good works, then it [viz., our honoring God by our works] is all pure deception. To all appearances God is honored, but in reality the self has been set up as an idol.[35]

Thus when people lose faith, they begin to worship themselves. The self becomes the ultimate reality--which then creates an egocentric world. The self becomes its own idol when people "worship their own thoughts" about

God or the good. These thoughts then prescribe the "laws" or "good works" which must be performed for the self to gain self-approval. The prescriptions are fulfilled by man's works. Thus the glory of God is transferred to human works.[36]

Once people put their trust in their own knowledge of the good and their own works to create and maintain the good (of themselves and society), the self has been set up as idol, replacing God in his Word of Promise and in his presence as address of the concrete in time. The uncontrollable God is no longer the center of man's being and becoming--as ongoing Creator. Instead, man has himself and his timeless ideas as the center of his being so that he can control his own becoming.

When God has been replaced by the self, man's active existence in the world and his response to the neighbor will necessarily be self-chosen works rather than the works which God commands by the natural law in relational existence. It is to consider this shift of works that we now turn.

2. The Self-Chosen Works of Distrust

Once the inner trust of the heart has changed from God to the self, one's active existence will also change to the doing of works which serve the self. Man will not be able to do God's works, or keep his natural law,--even if he tries to do so--within the legal god-relationship of his "inner man." Luther states explicitly,

> Keeping the Law . . . is something fictitious or a fictitious term, which means nothing apart from faith. Those who rely on works of the Law and want to give the appearance of keeping the Law do not keep it. . . .[37]

Why can "the Law" not be kept when one puts one's trust in works of the Law, i.e., when one uses "the Law" as a means of justifying oneself? The natural law is the ongoing call to service which comes in one's multiple callings that relate us to our "neighbors." This law can only be fulfilled by free activity which is responsive to what time and circumstance give. Those who rely on "works of the Law" do not keep the natural law. First, they do the works, not ultimately for the neighbor, but for self-approval. Secondly, they make a distinction amongst the works of relational existence in order to prescribe that body of laws or good works which will earn "God's" favor. They are thus dealing with a fictitious term when they speak of "the Law," for it is no longer God's ongoing addresses of the natural law. Thirdly, they do not keep the (natural) Law, because they exchange ongoing responsiveness and free activity with "outward works," i.e., works which are good by definition and not by the inward trust that guides the doing. Because of these three changes in one's doing, which we will now unfold, man is not keeping the Law, but performing self-chosen works.

Works serve the self. God's works which are the natural works of living in multiple relationships or callings cannot be fulfilled, if one relies on one's works to justify one's existence. The callings were given for the good of the neighbor. But if one has to create and maintain one's own worth, one loses the freedom to focus exclusively on the neighbor and his welfare. A person may think that he is doing good works for God and neighbor, but in fact, says Luther,

> . . . in all that he does or leaves undone, he rather seeks his own advantage and his own way. He seeks his own honor, rather than God's and that of his neighbor. Therefore, all his works, all his thoughts, all his life are evil and not godly.[38]

The works are not "evil" in themselves. A person who relies on his works can do great things outwardly. He can gain self-approval by using "all the gifts of the body and mind . . .--wisdom, righteousness, holiness, eloquence, power, beauty, or wealth."[39] The problem is not in the specific works at all, but in the "heart" of the doers who forget that "the monk is not justified by his order, nor the priest by the Mass . . ., nor the philosopher by wisdom, nor the theologian by theology, nor the Turk by the Koran, nor the Jew by Moses."[40] The great or socially good works become "evil and not godly"--viewed from its effect on the doer--, once they serve self-justification and not the neighbor. As soon as the issue of one's own worth or righteousness is linked to one's works, one is using them to set up the self as idol and thereby to withdraw from God's rule of one's life. The works which God gives us to do for the welfare of our neighbor in our callings, we wrest away from this use by ascribing them to ourselves and then presenting them to God for approval as our own good works. We have reversed the basic principle of non-egocentric (or: faith-ful) doing, namely, "that we let God alone work in us and that in all our powers we do nothing of our own."[41]

This introduction of "works" into one's god-relationship (or into the issue of one's justification and self-approval), while not having any decisive outward expression, nevertheless concretely affects one's relationship to one's neighbors. One begins to sever the common bond of humanity by either creating distinctions between the worth of people or by withdrawing from concrete neighbors. Luther notes the division amongst people that occurs, for example, when members of religious orders feel they are justified by their order, Thus a self-justifying monk "does not concede that the works which a layman performs in his calling are as good and acceptable to God as his own."[42] He feels that he is "better" or more "spiritual." Similarly the divisions amongst people of various religions (and cultures) come about because each group wants to be justified by their orders, civil patterns, rituals, works, and forms of worship. Religion, which should be the source of freedom to serve others as long as humanity remains, becomes a source of contention and conflict: "each contends that he has the true religion and worship of God."[43] The same division and conflict occurs in all ideological thinking in which a specific "religious" or atheistic order of things is idolized or absolutized.

One loses sight of the neighbor and withdraws from him--for whose sake all callings were instituted--when one uses one's works to justify oneself. Luther noticed this withdrawal from the neighbor and his claims particularly in the "religious activities" of people in the "religious" society of his time. For example, fasting, alms-giving, going on pilgrimages, and praying became ends in themselves--that is, their true "end" was to assure oneself of God's good pleasure--, rather than being a preparation of the "spirit" or inner man so that he can freely serve his neighbor. Luther finds an instance of this abuse in the so-called religiously committed parents who do religious works to the neglect of their children. He puts it this way:

> Husbands run to St. James, wives make vows to Our Lady. No one vows to train and teach himself and his child to honor God properly. Those whom God has commanded a man to keep in body and soul he leaves behind, and wants to serve God in some place or another, something that was never commanded.[44]

Similarly people in religious or monastic orders forgot that their calling is to serve "the neighbor" with "spiritual government" (whose foundation, as we heard, is the intentional communication of God's Promise and commands). The orders became self-serving, i.e., serving one's own need to appear religious and spiritual to oneself or serving one's private relationship to God. As a result an ideal of the religious life came to include: "living a celibate life" or "dwelling in the desert"--far from human habitation and the claims of social existence.[45] These two examples of an "outward" withdrawal from the needs of others simply express the inner withdrawal from the neighbor that is occurring whenever one uses one's works to establish one's own goodness. The natural law written into relational existence is either misused or ignored.

Works are prescribed. When one ascribes the works one does in one's callings to oneself, one is not only withdrawing from the neighbor. One also draws back from the undifferentiated mixture of great and trivial works that pour in on man through the very process of relational living. If a person has to win approval from his "new god" by his works, "he searches within himself for the best thing to do; then a distinction of works arises by which he imagines he may win favor."[46] Man will distinguish between important and unimportant, good and bad works on the basis of his idea of what is "good" or "god-pleasing." He (or his society) chooses the works which he must do to gain approval. Rather than doing whatever comes to hand, he does the good works prescribed by his idol. As a result many of the works of relational living will not be done--as we already saw in the case of the religious parents or the self-justifying monk. These self-chosen works, again, need not be bad in themselves. Of course, if one's idol is prestige, political power, money, or private pleasure, one will be "forced" by this ultimate concern to favor appearances over truth, political expedience over justice, profit at all cost over fairness to consumer and environment, and personal satisfaction over the needs of others. In a spiritual sense, these works that the self chooses are not the most dangerous, since it is easy to recognize that they are not God's works or will. The truly dangerous self-chosen works are those whose un-godliness is hidden. For "when the evil spirit, who never rests, cannot lead us into evil works on the left, he fights on our right through selfdevised works which seem good."[47] It is hard to tear people away "from the works which they think good and right, and to turn . . . [them] to the plain meaning of God's commandment."[48] The "good" self-chosen works become the most severe rivals to God's commandments--especially because they can virtually look alike in terms of content. Thus the Decalogue can be a true witness to the natural works of relational living. Or, the same Ten Commandments can be used as a prescribed moral law, whose performance assures us of God's favor. In the latter case, the Decalogue is a series of "self-chosen" works--chosen as our prescription of the (timeless and objective) will of God. Once the Decalogue is performed as a moral code, we will necessarily lose out of sight the morality of all of daily living with its most trivial tasks. We will focus on so-called "moral issues" or moral dilemmas, making sure that we respond to these particular cases according to the timeless code. The moral code replaces existence as ongoing moral address. Only in the freedom and responsiveness of faith can such a trivial task as "picking up a straw"[49] be a part of man's "moral" response or "spiritual activity" before the Creator of all of existence. The person who has to justify himself does not recognize that all works can serve God, if done in faith.[50]

Works are done "outwardly". Closely connected with choosing amongst the works of life which of them are "good" according to one's idea of the good is the fact that "goodness" becomes a quality of the work itself and not a characteristic of one's way of doing. We described above that the natural law requires free activity or "love" as the way of responding to any situation. Only such free activity is responsive to the concrete and temporal. Only such free activity allows for novel actions taken in personal responsibility. Once the works which "God" demands are accessible as a prescription, they can be done "outwardly" rather than by love and personal responsibility born of faith. People can appease their conscience--and escape personal responsibility for their actions--by merely performing the good works that are prescribed or by staying within the limits set by a specific moral or civil code of behavior.

Again Luther observed the consequences of people performing outwardly good works within the context of his "religious" society. He notes that this outward doing leaves many of the ubiquitous challenges of the natural law and will of God aside. Luther illustrates this with the case of people "honoring God" with "outward works" or prescribed good works--which all happen to be "churchly activities":

> What good would it be for a man to do all manner of good, make pilgrimages to Rome and to all the holy places, acquire all indulgences, build all churches and found all endowments, if he were found guilty of sin against the name and honor of God by not speaking, by deserting the truth, and by regarding his possessions, honor, favor, and friends more highly than the truth which is God's name and honor itself? Or who is he at whose door and into whose house such good works do not present themselves every day? There is no need for him to travel far or to inquire about good works.[51]

The escape from personal responsibility is captured in three images. People go around inquiring after which works are "good" in themselves--i.e., expected by their society--, rather than doing those works which present themselves "every day." Then people are also willing to travel afar to do the prescribed "good," rather than noting what is present as a challenge "at the door" or "in one's own house." The irony is that one escapes daily responsibility by travelling far to do good works. Finally, people can devote themselves to doing all those things seen as most noble and religious--and praised and marvelled at by society--and, at the same time, avoid the most basic, and hardest task that one can do for the honor of God, namely, to consistently stand up for the truth. For example, it is much easier and prestigious to endow a university, than to challenge ideological thinking at that university. Standing up for the truth can only be done in personal responsibility. Here one truly risks one's public esteem, one's possessions and friends in a way that is not present when one simply "outwardly" gives money as an endowment. Thus it is impossible to either "honor God" or fulfill the natural law by outward works.

To conclude: Once a person relies on works of "the Law," he cannot keep God's natural law. He will search for a prescription of good works which can be performed without inner engagement and change--all for the purpose of gaining self-approval from "God," society, or one's self-image. The self has thus withdrawn from the authentic humanness of an embedded but responsible existence, replacing it with an egocentric world and its demands.

3. The Hidden Nature of Sin

People can "fall" out of the world-view of faith (in which free responsibility is central) into the world-view of sin (in which some idea of the good is the hermeneutic key). They can reject their freedom and responsibility in favor of an egocentric and legal interpretation of existence and its demands. But they are not free to regain their rejected freedom on their own. By rejecting faith in the Word--the source of freedom--, they enter into a closed system in which the relationships of self to "God" and to "the neighbor" are all defined by "law" and works of law. Why is "sin" a "closed-system" in which one is trapped once one enters its way of looking at life? The basic reason one cannot liberate oneself from within the system is the hidden nature of sin.

Luther gives a clear exposition of the hiddenness of sin and its consequences when he reflects on Adam and Eve's lack of sin-consciousness after they had transgressed God's specific mandate. Satan had given "another word" and promised Eve a "new wisdom" if she ate from the forbidden tree. Luther remarks:

> This poison of Satan she drank with her ears; she stretched out her hand to the forbidden fruit; and she ate it with her mouth. And so she sins through all her senses of soul and body, and yet she is not aware of her sin. She eats the fruit with pleasure, and she urges her husband also to do the same.[52]

Although "sin" is committed by the whole person, Eve is not aware of it, because the sinful action is preceded by her "ears" receiving the "other word" which implies a whole re-ordering of the self's relationships to God and world. Far from feeling sinful, Eve *smugly* transgresses God's mandate.[53] After the "other word" is accepted with its offer of direct knowledge of God, Eve's act appears to her as an act of wisdom. Her actions are endorsed and approved by the idea of the good she worships. Luther says, "This is what the devil is wont to bring about in all his temptations, that the farther man draws away from the Word, the more learned and the wiser he appears to himself."[54] Thus Adam and Eve feel enlightened in their new found "freedom" of action--as it appears to them. They now think they *know* the essence of God's will, and are, therefore, in a position to judge whether God can truly be concerned about such trivial details as eating from a certain tree. After all they *know* that the Creator creates things for their good and not for harm. The general maxim Luther draws from this story is:

> While sin is active, it is not felt. It does not frighten, and it does not bite; but it flatters and delights.[55]

The story of Adam and Eve shows that sin escapes detection, because it occurs first of all on the level of one's way of interpreting life. Expressed differently, the first change is a change of "heart" or of one's inner god-relationship. The uncontrollable Creator is first replaced with one's own thoughts and works as the object of trust. One's actions find their justification in terms of these "thoughts" or of the invented form of God which exists nowhere. The self withdraws from the demands of existence and sets itself up as idol. For the irreligious this attempt to control existence and choose to make something out of oneself does not appear as sin, since they do not acknowledge a God as their Creator. And the religious can set themselves up as idol under the guise of finally knowing God's will and doing it in their works.

One also does not notice or "feel" directly that one has lost authentic humanness when one withdraws from embedment in multiple relationships and from free activity. In the story of Adam and Eve, the predicted consequence of transgressing God's mandate was death--as the death of true humanness. Eve, however, does not see her "death":

> Through her unbelief she had fallen from the Word into a lie. Therefore before God's eyes she was already dead. Because Satan restrains her mind and eyes, however, she not only does not see death or become aware of it, but gradually she is also more inflamed by her desire. . . .[56]

It is the satanic delusion of the world-view of sin which prevents man from seeing the death of his true nature. He no longer realizes that his true self is constituted by faith in the Word of Promise, after he has put his faith in a "lie." Expressed in an alternate language of Luther's: one does not notice one's loss of "original righteousness"--which relates one to God and his natural law in trust--, because in distrust one replaces it with the "presumption of righteousness."[57] Man still feels "righteous" and "justified" or worth-while after sin, since sin is the establishment of a legal righteousness which one can create oneself. One justifies oneself by one's works as measured by one's "idea of the good." As a result, one can withdraw from the neighbor and transgress the natural law without having any sin-consciousness. One will act smugly or self-confidently, knowing oneself to be right.

Of course, in the legal world-view of sin, it will be a frequent occurrence that one does not live up to "the law" or the demands of one's new god. The result of transgressing the moral or personal code will lead to guilt feelings. One can easily come to despair when one is faced with a lawyer-god who can only uphold the sanctity of the timeless demands (and not provide the freedom for action). But this sense of failing to achieve the necessary "good works" is not sin-consciousness, but rather a form of accepting the sinful legal god-relationship which distrust has created. Luther notes the fruitlessness of such despair at one's failings:

> Many people have gone quite crazy with them [viz., the many good works which are demanded to earn God's favor] and their anxiety has brought them into all kinds of misery. Of these is written in Wisdom [of Solomon] 5 [:6], "We have *wearied ourselves in the wrong way* and have followed a hard and bitter road; but *God's way* we have not acknowledged and the sun of righteousness has not risen upon us."[58]

The hard work and the anxiety at one's shortcomings were all *within* "the wrong way," i.e., the legal way, of relating to God and his will. They did not bring about a recognition of the wrongness of the "way" itself. Therefore this anxiety is an unhealthy despair. It is simply the reverse of the presumption of righteousness, reinforcing the notion that God's favor is to be earned by works of the law. It should not be confused with the "healthy despair" of true sin-consciousness in which, as we shall see, the whole legal way of ordering reality shatters. In sum: the guilt-feelings and anxiety that are aroused within the legal system of trying to live up to a certain standard or to fulfill a certain moral code are not sin-consciousness, but rather are a way of hiding the sinfulness of this system from one's consciousness.

We conclude: whether one presumes righteousness on the basis of knowing the good in a timeless form or whether one despairs of achieving one's own righteousness, the real sin of trusting one's works and setting the self in the place of God remains hidden. Man can reject his God-given freedom by refusing to trust the uncontrollable. But man cannot free himself from the ego-centric, legal system he "falls into," because he is not conscious of the fact that his legal interpretation of self, God, and the demands of existence is in fact a specific narrow perspective on life. We remember that in "the Fall," man has replaced believing with direct knowing. He now thinks that he has a direct access to reality and God, rather than that he has simply exchanged a broad perspective which is open to the changing demands of created life for a closed-system of thought revolving around man's own ideas about life. Man is trapped in sin, because sin negates its own nature as a limited perspective on existence.

If man is to be liberated from the perspective of sin, something or someone from the outside must break into this closed-system of thought. Sin's secure and controlling view of life must be torn apart, if a person is to discover the way faith looks at life. God's indirect communication with man must bring about a reversal of perspectives. It must bring about a reversal from knowing to trusting and obeying as the key to one's relationship with God. It must bring about a reversal from "presumption of righteousness" to the righteousness which faith receives as a gift. It must bring about a reversal in human actions from performing self-chosen works to serving one's neighbor in one's daily vocations. In short, it must re-create man in his relationships to God, self, and others. God restores us to true humanness by a communication of reversals.

CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNICATION OF REVERSAL

In order to create humans as beings who trust their Creator and willingly serve their neighbors within their daily vocations, God clothes himself in creation and the Word. In order to re-create sinful humans who trust themselves and perform self-chosen works, God clothes himself in creation and the Word made flesh. Jesus Christ is the incarnate presence of God's good will toward sinners. He reveals God's gracious and forgiving will, not by finally providing a direct, observable knowledge of God, but by spelling the death of such presumptuous knowledge. Man's search for a direct access to ultimate truth and reality is confronted by a man who lived among us full of truth and grace, at a particular time in human history. As God's Word in a historical human life, Jesus is the paradigm of indirect communication. In Jesus Christ the unfamiliar is present in the familiar, the eternal in the temporal, the infinite in the finite, God in man. One can never separate the one from the other, for only in their paradoxical relationship can they tear apart our secure and familiar perspective of sin and point to a hidden and new context for looking at life. Thus the first task of this chapter will be to look at (A) Jesus Christ as God's indirect communication with sinful humans.

Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God's grace for sinners, becomes present for individuals today in "the Word" (which includes words, sacraments and symbolic actions of humans). The Word must function dialectically, if it is to inspire trust in God's promise and grace in sinful humans. The Word of grace must destroy the "old self" with its secure and sinful view of life so that a "new self" which lives by grace can be born. Luther calls this dialectical working of the Word "Law and Gospel." Thus the second task of this chapter will be to look at (B) the dialectic of Law and Gospel.

A. Jesus Christ: God's Indirect Communication

1. Jesus Christ as the Source of Reversal

God's ultimate revelation of himself is not the unveiling of previously hidden religious concepts, nor the teaching of a timeless body of laws, nor the imparting of certain religious experiences. His revelation was the human Jesus who lived a life in history. The attempts to use speculative reason to discern "the divine" either in or beyond the created is thereby exposed as sin. The pious or idealistic hope that human feelings or human reason and ideas can somehow be a direct access to God (or to what is ultimately real and true in life) is condemned as a form of idolatry: the human self (with the closed circle of its thought) becomes the object of our devotion. We trust in human ideas and faculties to plumb the depths of reality.

Luther expresses the notion that the attempt to gain a direct knowledge of God is sin with the imagery that Jesus Christ must slay "reason" so that faith in God can arise. When Luther speaks of "reason" as the enemy of God and faith, he is clearly using the term in a theological, not a phenomenological sense.

Phenomenologically speaking, "reason" is one of man's "good" natural endowments. Reason distinguishes man from the un-reasoning animals. Man is indeed a "rational animal." "Reason" is, in Aristotelean language, the major "formal cause" of man which gives him distinctiveness and worth.[1] (This "formal" distinctiveness of man does, however, not yet characterize man's "theological nature," namely his nature as "spirit" in relationship to God.) There is nothing "sinful" or bad about reason as such, just as there is nothing bad about science and knowledge when they acknowledge their limits.

As a theological term, "reason" refers to man's presumptuous knowledge[2] of what lies beyond the created coverings of God. Reason-as-access-to-God is, therefore, nothing other than speculation about the Divine Majesty or the uncovered divine essence.[3] By transcending created measure, space, and time, man sets himself up as the measure of ultimate reality.[4] As we have seen, this speculation and self-idolatry necessarily leads to the invention of a god who must be appeased by works of the law. "Reason" thus becomes an alternate way of relating to God and existence from "faith," since "reason" "wants to be justified through the Law."[5]

If God is to re-create authentic humans, he must find a means to "slay (presumptuous) reason, which is the greatest and most invincible enemy of God, because it despises God and denies His wisdom, justice, power, truthfulness, mercy, majesty, and divinity."[6] God can only restore "faith" as man's way of relating to God, if he stops man's speculations about God's essence (which leads to idolatry and works-righteousness). To end our speculations, God lets his "eternal (uncreated) Word" be clothed in a concrete historical man who walks on this temporal earth.[7] God wants to lead our thoughts "out of ourselves into Christ."[8] There is an epistemological and a soteriological dimension to God binding himself to the humanity of Christ and focussing our search for God and his will on this concrete person. Both dimensions, however, belong intimately together, so that one cannot "understand" God's will as manifest in Christ unless one lets oneself be "saved" from a God of Majesty and Law by this "incarnate and human God."[9] God's presence in Christ is an epistemological and soteriological end to the speculations of presumptuous reason.

The epistemological reason for God's uncreated Word being clothed in created flesh and blood is that man's reason cannot actually transcend creation and time. Any attempt to do so, makes man into the measure of all things, i.e., into his own god. Luther expresses this dimension of the incarnation in the following extended quote from the Kirchenpostille on John 1:1-14:

> He [viz., God] does not want to scatter us amongst the creatures which are created through him so that we run after him, search him and speculate about him there . . .; rather he wants to gather us out of those very scattered and flighty thoughts [weitlaeufigen, spazierfluechtigen Gedanken] into Christ. It is as if he wanted to say: "What are you running about and searching so far away? Look here, in Christ, the human, everything is present. He has made everything; in him is the life; he is the Word through whom all things were made; remain in him, and you will find all of it.[10]

Man cannot find God in creation--nor beyond creation--on his own. He does not have to search out God in or beyond creation, because God's will and Word are truly present in the human Christ. Here God's Word is "signified" or intentionally communicated or "manifested" to sinful man in a concrete and temporal form. As we heard, God's "manifestation" or intentional communication of his will toward man is always in "clothed" or bodily form. The historical Christ is God's bodily significatory presence within a world of sinners. Christ is the concrete focus for their thoughts about God's intentions towards them.[11] If sinners want to know, not the content of the thoughts of the Creator, but the intentions of all these thoughts in respect to them, they can gain certainty by looking at the human Christ. Here God has bound himself "for us."[12]

Since "knowledge" in the theological or spiritual realm is never objective knowing about God and his will, but always a relational knowing of God's will toward man, the epistemological dimension of the incarnate presence of God is also always soteriological. It always deals with "saving knowledge," i.e., with the nature of the relationship between self and God that is necessary for authentic human existence. Speculative knowledge of God, in contrast, is destructive knowledge causing either despair or the loss of a trusting God-relationship. If you attempt to comprehend God on your own, says Luther, or try to pacify his wrath over sin by your own works, "you will inevitably fall, as Lucifer did . . ., and in horrible despair lose God and everything."[13] If the absolute and infinite God is not to lead us to despair or presumption, we must "put a check on this speculative spirit" and take hold of God as he is mediated to us in the human Christ.[14] In "this Man," "you will see the love, the goodness, and the sweetness of God. You will see His wisdom, His power, and His majesty sweetened and mitigated to your ability to stand it."[15] The God who is mediated and "mitigated" by Christ is someone who inspires trust, rather than overwhelming man with his absolute majesty or burdening him with infinite demands. Speculative reason leads to a god-relationship of fear and works. The incarnate God leads to one of faith. We can summarize the soteriological dimension of the incarnation in the following words of Luther:

> Therefore whenever you are concerned to think and act about your salvation, you must put away all speculations about the Majesty, all thoughts of works, traditions, and philosophy--indeed, of the Law of God itself. And you must run directly to the manger and the mother's womb, embrace this Infant and Virgin's Child in your arms, and look at Him--born, being nursed, growing up, going about in human society, teaching, dying, rising again, ascending above all the heavens, and having authority over all things. In this way you can shake off all terrors and errors, as the sun dispels the clouds.[16]

Christ is thus the end of "speculative reason" or direct knowledge of God and the new beginning of "faith" or indirect knowledge of God. His purpose is to bring about a reversal in man's type of god-relationship--from knowing the good and "working" to trusting God and loving the neighbor.

This reversal of the orientation of the inner man is nothing other than a new birth of an authentic human. It changes man from being an (often unconscious) enemy of God, who sets himself up as the idol, into a child of God.[17] The reversal is the death of the "old" (egocentric) self, and the birth of a "new" (theocentric) self. No number of human ideas of the ultimate and no number of works of the Law can bring about this change of "selves." All these attempts to "improve" or change oneself remain within the self-willed system of sin. It is only out of the will of God--and not our own wills--that the new birth can take place, since he alone can send the system-breaking Christ into our closed worlds.[18] Therefore the Gospel speaks of "faith in Christ's name as that which makes God's children."[19] If "good works never change a person,"[20] how can Christ bring about a fundamental change? Christ can bring about a change, because as "light of grace" he does battle against the whole system and world-view created by presumptuous reason,[21] rather than bringing about modifications within the system.

Luther expresses this conflict and the possible reversal of perspectives as follows:

> If now the Gospel comes and witnesses to the light of grace [saying] that man must not do and live according to his presumption, but rather that his natural light must be rejected, killed, and put away; and if man accepts and follows such a witness, sacrifices his light and presumption, willingly accepts being a fool, and lets himself be led, taught, and enlightened--behold, he will be changed in his main part, that is, in his natural light. Then his old light is extinguished and a new light, faith, is lit.[22]

Christ, and the Gospel which witnesses to him, offers grace or a gracious God, whereas false reason relies on works. These are opposite ways of relating to God. Christ makes this new way a present possibility, which can be accepted by an act of reversal. The test of whether a new birth has taken place comes in temptation and death. In those situations "one feels who is born new or old."[23] In the "old born," reason will not like to let go of the "old light" and with it its wishes and desires. In contrast the "new born" or those who are in the process of being reborn; they will let go of light, life, good, honor and what they have. They will trust and cling to the witness. That is, they have come to the unconditional trust that is characteristic of authentic man. They will be the trusting inner man, who alone has the true God as the object of trust.

This reversal of the inner man which is brought about by Christ as the light of grace necessarily changes the whole person and all his powers.[24] The process of change is like that of a snake who crawls through a crevice to peel off its old skin. Man must crawl into or through the Gospel. After the "head" or inner man is changed, the rest must (gradually) follow--as new situations demand a new response and re-assessment in the light of faith. That person becomes a new person

> . . . who looks at all things differently than before, who judges differently, evaluates differently, thinks differently, wills differently, speaks differently, loves differently, desires differently, works and fares differently than before. . . .[25]

Both man's way of seeing life, and man's way of responding or relating to the people and tasks of daily life have changed with the change of "heart." In sum: Christ brings about a recreation of the whole person--without ever changing man's ontological "structures" but only the opinion or reason of the heart.

2. Christ as the Word of God

Christ's role is to "slay (presumptuous) reason" and restore "faith" as man's way of "having" a God. His purpose is thus to be God's means for re-creating man by bringing about a reversal of the grounding of man's self, i.e., a "change of heart." He carries out this role by being the incarnation of God's will. As incarnate God or "clothed presence" of God, Christ is the restoration of indirect communication between God and man. He "reveals" God's will toward man by "hiding" God or being the end of any direct knowledge of God. Luther's key term to describe the nature of Christ is, therefore, a term for his function, namely, to be the (intentional) Word of God.[26]

Christ is the Word of God--not as Logos which addresses the mind, as we heard previously--, but as the "light of grace" which affects the heart or inner man.[27] He is the concrete presence of God's gracious will in the world of sinners. He is not an "empty sign" but a "performative sign" of God, so that the reality of God becomes present for man's heart in this sign.[28] God is "in" Christ, the Word, so that "he who has the Word, has the whole Godhead."[29] Not only Christ's teachings, but his whole person, life, and ministry communicate or "reveal" that God is gracious. Christ communicates the intentions God had toward man from the beginning of creation. The distinctiveness of his communication is the "timing" or place, namely that his grace is applicable to sinners. He reveals that God's promise of grace is made on the basis of God's merciful intentions and is not made because of man's worthiness or merit, nor is it deterred or delayed by man's sin.[30] If sinners look at Christ, they can thus have certainty about God's will toward them--even when their own conscience still accuses them and tries to present a wrathful God.

However, as in all of God's intentional communication, concrete presence or "revelation" does not mean a direct presence of God for an observing mind, but a presence only for faith. Only he who believes the witness to God's grace has "the light of grace" or Christ in his heart. Only in the heart can Christ, the Word, be the basis of a new self which grounds itself in the hidden God.[31]

One can only understand God's concrete communication, Christ, by engaged or relational knowing which affects one's own nature and one's response to existence. This is the "normal hiddenness" of any divine communication. However, the fact of man being preoccupied by an alternate "god" and perspective on life adds an "additional hiddenness," if I may put it this way. Christ cannot be recognized or acknowledged as the unmerited gift of God's grace by anyone who clings to his presumptuous knowledge of "God" and to his own "works" as a means of God's approval. In their presumption of knowledge and in their presumption of righteousness, people can prefer their "new wisdom" and reject, persecute, and crucify the wisdom of God, which appears to them as folly.[32]

In the language of John's Prologue, Luther expresses this "additional hiddenness" caused by sin as "darkness." He says,

> . . . this light of grace, which is given to humans above the natural light [of reason] shines in the darkness, that is, under the blind and graceless people of the world, but they do not receive it; rather they also persecute it.[33]

People prefer "the darkness," namely, their own artificial light, to God's light. The problem of understanding Christ as the Word of God is thus not an intellectual difficulty. It is the "existential problem"--in Ebeling's words--of man not wanting to let his sinful, ego-centric world and worldview be destroyed.[34]

Christ is God's indirect communication par excellence, because he can only be understood by a process of a reversal of perspectives.

Otherwise his nature as God's true sign and Word remains hidden. Luther summarizes the hiddenness of the light of grace which is brought about by false reason in the following words:

> Thus it has been said sufficiently above how reason with its light fights and storms against this light [of grace] rather than comprehending and acknowledging it. The word is sure which says: The darkness does not comprehend this light. Therefore reason with its light must be captured and blinded, as he says Isaiah 60:19 _et seq_.: I will cover your sun (that is, your reason) with a cloud," that is, with the Gospel or Word of God . . . which demands faith and makes reason into a fool.[35]

Christ can only be understood as God's revelation, if he, rather than one's own knowledge of the ultimate and one's works, becomes the object of exclusive trust. He therefore remains a hidden revelation until reason is "blinded," i.e., a reversal of one's trust and perspective takes place. Christ is God's communication of reversal.

3. Christ's Presence Today

The role of Christ is to change the individual human heart from presumption to faith. He carries out this role by being God's Word, his communication of reversal. If this "Word of God" is to affect individuals in the core of their personhood today, it must be a present reality. It must break into the closed-system which the individual creates in his own distinctive way, in his own time and culture. Only the individual can reinterpret his own life and find new, trusting responses to what his time gives. There can be no second-hand believers. The issue this raises is the relationship of God's incarnation in the historical person Jesus to people in the present.

Christ is not a directly observable "historical revelation" of God. He is God's revelation in time as "the Word." Implied in this central image for the divine function and nature of the human Christ is a specific notion of how revelation and time relate to one another. Since Christ reveals God as indirect communication, God's incarnation or revelation in time is not complete until Christ is the object of trust in the heart of an individual. By means of Christ, the Word, God enters time and history in the faith--and its resulting responses--of individual humans. As Bornkamm has stressed, the point of encounter between God's eternal will (the uncreated Word) and time is, if properly understood, not Christ, but the individual human.[36] The mere historical figure of Christ is nothing by itself, until or unless it "preaches or shines" the light of grace into an individual's heart, thereby allowing God's will to enter time and historical decisions.[37]

Since God's gracious will enters time through the heart of the individual human, Christ's life and work can only serve God's purpose of re-creating hearts if it becomes a present address today. Just as Christ was God's present "Word" or "preaching" to Jesus' contemporaries, so he must continue to be present as "Word" or "preaching" today. It is by means of "the Word" which humans teach or proclaim that Christ becomes present for an individual's heart and God carries out his work of re-creation.[38] Not only the God in creation, but also the God incarnate requires intentional human communication to affect people today. "Set aside the word, 'Christ, God's Son, is our Savior,' and I would like to see who would have Christ, or to whom he would be of any (spiritual) use," says Luther who claimed the same about God.[39]

Contemporary Christian communication is the presence of Christ, the Word of God, for people today. The difference between the "historical Christ" and the "present Christ" is--in one of Luther's images--that between the "work" of Christ and its "distribution." His "work" is that he has gained the forgiveness of sins for us. Thus Luther says, "Christ has once for all merited and won for us the forgiveness of sins on the cross; but this forgiveness he distributes wherever he is, at all times and in all places. . . ."[40] The historical life and work of Christ remains the basis for any contemporary "distributed presence" of Christ. His work and revelation of God's forgiveness occurs "once for all times." However, this past historical event is not limited to time and place but can (and must) be distributed into each time and place to have any relevance for the people there.

Luther amplifies the distinction between "work" or "merit" of Christ and the "distribution of the merit" with the distinction between the "fact" of Christ's work and the spiritual "use of the fact." Luther expresses this second distinction as follows:

> The passion of Christ occurred but once on the cross. But whom would it benefit if it were not distributed, applied, and put to use? And how could it be put to use and distributed except through Word and sacrament?[41]

Christ and his work become of use to the human spirit, if he is "applied" to a person's situation. Christ must be "put to use" as God's means of breaking into the system of sin and of overcoming its hold on man's spirit. The "fact" becomes "spiritually useful" only when it serves to reveal and forgive the present false trust of the human spirit.

The means by which the historical Christ becomes spiritually useful is captured in the shorthand phrase: "through Word and sacrament." Luther can give other lists of the way Christ "distributes" himself, such as: "through preaching, baptizing, the Spirit, reading, believing, eating, and in whatever way he wishes, wherever he is, and whatever he is, and whatever he does."[42] However, the phrase "through Word and sacrament" remains useful, since it expresses that Christ's presence is always a "bodily," concrete presence--as in the created elements of the sacraments. At the same time, it indicates that no concrete thing or act is Christ's presence or God's revelation unless it has a "Word-nature" which addresses man and calls for faith. Just as the historical Christ was a concrete presence of God's will as "sign" or "Word," so any forms of his "distributed presence" must have these two dimensions. In Loefgren's words, there is a "basic christological structure" to contemporary Christian communication.[43] In my language, the togetherness of the "concrete" and the "significatory" makes all distribution of Christ into "indirect communication." Because the two dimensions are inseparable, Luther understands the sacraments as Word, as living address of God, and any spoken Word or witness as "sacrament" or concrete presence of Christ and his forgiveness.[44] There is no fundamental difference between proclaiming the Word and distributing the sacraments in terms of the indirect form, their content of God's grace to sinners, and their effect of renewing man, not by ontological change, but by a renewal of "sight."[45] They only differ "outwardly" so that they can engage man, the whole person, in various ways.

While humans are charged to "preach and teach" the Word, to administer the sacraments, and by all these means to forgive sins, the new creation of trusting selves remains a work of Divine Majesty which humans cannot control. God cannot recreate people without the concrete means of "Word and sacrament" which are entrusted to humans. And yet humans have no method or technique for letting their attempts at communicating God's grace to sinners penetrate into the human heart which is preoccupied with its own presumptions. In spite of all human "proclamation," there are few "hearers" who move from presumption to faith. In their presumptuous knowledge, they will "not care about the Word at all but smugly despise it, as though it did not pertain to them at all."[46] What, then, makes "the Word" which humans teach "pertain" to some people as that which brings about a rebirth? The spiritually effective Word is, according to Luther, "not only the sound of my voice but . . . something that is heard by you, penetrates into your heart, and is believed by you."[47] This "something" which allows human language to penetrate man's smugness and presumption is the Holy Spirit, i.e., God's Spirit of creation and re-creation. Man cannot determine when and where God's Spirit will use "the sound of my voice" to carry out the work of recreation. Thus it remains a mystery and miracle when someone "experiences love toward the Word";[48] and thereby a new birth out of the will of God is effected.

In conclusion: Jesus Christ is God's indirect communication with sinful humans and not a direct access to previously hidden knowledge about the divine or ultimately real. God's communication of his gracious will toward humans is even more indirect after the fact of sin than it was to Adam (or humans in the state of innocence). Adam could only know the God clothed in creation by means of the Word and faith. He had no direct perception of God. For the sinner God is even more hidden, exactly because of his presumed knowledge of what is ultimately real and true. Jesus Christ can only be a sign of God's grace, if he destroys this presumed knowledge. Grace must act in the strange way of killing for the sake of life, of tearing apart our familiar world-view so that a life of faith becomes possible. Jesus Christ is God's indirect communication by bringing about this reversal of perspectives, this reversal from sin to faith.

Not only Jesus' function of bringing about a reversal marks him as God's indirect communication, but also his nature. Luther says that Jesus Christ has a word-nature. He embodies God in such a way that he is a "sign" of God, a pointer to the hidden God. The divine does not shine through some cracks in his humanity. One cannot abstract the eternal from the temporal life. What Luther tries to capture in the images that Jesus is a "bodily presence" of God and at the same time as a "sign" of God, we could express in today's hermeneutic jargon as Jesus being the metaphor of God.

Finally, Jesus is God's indirect communication, because God's presence in him can only be understood as individual humans then and today come to faith through him. The historical Jesus must be distributed to people today, so that they can be confronted in their narrow perspective on life and so that they can receive the sight of faith. Ultimately it remains a mystery of God as Holy Spirit how and why contemporary proclamation of Christ leads one person to an embodied faith and some one else to defiance of God.

Although the actual re-creation of humans is a work and mystery of God, the contemporary Word or process of Christian communication works quite unmagically.[49] We can describe quite clearly the dialectical process which Christian communication must follow, if it seeks to bring about a reversal from a perspective of sin to a perspective of faith. Luther calls the process "Law and Gospel."

B. The Dialectic of Law and Gospel

1. The One Word of Grace

The aim of intentional Christian communication in a sinful world is to make the light of grace present for "the hearers." Because the hearer is preoccupied with the presumptuous light of reason, the communication of God's grace to him--as revealed in Christ--must be dialectical. "The light of grace," as we heard, must first "blind" man's "old light" of presumptuous knowledge before it can be the "new light" to enlighten man's heart.[50] Or expressed in a different imagery of Luther's: God must first perform an "alien work" of killing the old self, so that he can do his "proper work" of bringing to life a new self.[51] The human communication of God's one Word of grace thus entails two dialectically opposite processes. Luther calls these dialectical opposites which are necessary for the Word of grace to engage a hearer "Law and Gospel." The function of "the Law" is to kill the presumptuous self by revealing the sin of the self's "closed system." The function of "the Gospel" is to create a new self of trust in God's grace by offering forgiveness of sin. The two functions are part of the one (dialectical) process of communicating grace.

Before we look at the two functions of "killing" and "making alive" separately, we must underline that "Law and Gospel" is one process of grace. God only "kills" "for the sake of life."[52] A superficial reading of Luther can easily lead to confusion at this point, since Luther does not always express both sides of the dialectic at the same time. Thus one can gain the impression as if "the Law" were a separate way of salvation which God abandoned in favor of the Gospel as a new way of salvation, instituted because man did not manage to keep the Law and therefore could never justify himself. A closer reading shows that the reason "the Law does not justify," according to Luther, is that it never was given for justification,[53] but rather was "added to the promise" (of unmerited grace) in order to "reveal sin theologically," i.e., to man's spirit.[54] This revelation of sin is the function of killing presumption so "that grace can gave access to us. Therefore the Law is a minister and a preparation for grace."[55] The forgiveness of sins can only be received as grace by those who have a consciousness of their real sin of creating an ego-centric, closed universe. Luther can even reverse his own language on "the Law not justifying" to express the intimate connection of the ministry of the Law with that of the Gospel of grace. Thus Luther says, "that the Law with its function does contribute to justification--not because it justifies, but because it impels one to the promise of grace and makes it sweet and desirable."[56] Although Luther speaks of a "time of the Law" which is followed by "the time of the Gospel" (or: "time of grace"), these "times" are not a chronological sequence of two "ways of salvation," as if "the Law" were abolished permanently by the coming of Christ. Rather the abrogation of the Law which happens in the coming of Christ "happens personally and spiritually every day in any Christian, in whom there are found the time of Law and the time of grace in constant alternation."[57] The times of Law and grace are therefore terms for an ongoing process of spiritual reversal.

In sum: there is, from the beginning of time, only one "way of salvation" or "way of justification," namely, living by grace. The fact of sin makes the communication of this grace dialectical. Thus one "first" needs the function of "the Law" to destroy all attempts at self-justification--i.e., "the Law" destroys all attempts of people to be justified by "works of the Law"[58]--before the Word of grace can become the key to man's self-understanding and to his interpretation of the demands of daily existence. The conversion to grace is not a single event but a daily conversion in which both functions are "in constant alternation."

We now turn to consider the functions of the Law and the Gospel separately in their necessary spiritual or existential sequence of "times."

2. The Preached Law Reveals Sin

As we heard above,[59] the real hold sin has on people comes from its hiddenness. A reversal to authentic existence, therefore, requires that, as a first stage, sin be revealed. This is the task of "the Law." In a typical image of Luther's, the hiddenness of sin is described in terms of the presumption of righteousness being a beast or a solid wall that blocks the heart from self-knowledge (that it is sinful) and from grace. "The Law," then is the "hammer of God" whose task it is to smash the solid wall or "to break, bruise, crush, and annihilate this beast with its false confidence, wisdom, righteousness, and power, so that it learns that it has been destroyed and damned by its evil.[60] "The Law" functions, in this image, not as that which adds some demands to the self-chosen works of the Law, but as that which smashes or breaks the whole legal-system of sin's approach to self, God, and others. "The Law" does not give gentle, rational enlightenment about eternal moral principles. Such an enlightenment could be received within the system of sin, bringing about only a possible change in the definition of what good works or what values are the ultimate legal standard. Rather, "the Law" destroys those elements of sin's legal system which maintain it and keep it "hidden" as sin, namely, man's "new wisdom," his confidence that he is right in what he does, his sense of (self-) righteousness, and his feeling of power or personal control over his worth and destiny. "Therefore," concludes Luther, "the true function and the chief and proper use of the Law is to reveal to man his sin, blindness, misery, wickedness, ignorance, hate and contempt of God. . . ."[61] Luther does not claim that those who have to hear "the Law" feel any hatred or contempt for God, nor that they are in any way overtly "wicked." It is exactly because of their overt goodness and possible religiousness that "the Law" is necessary to reveal that one has set up the self as idol in opposition to the uncontrollable or hidden God. God has to institute "the

Law" as a means of revelation and preparation for grace, because the blind people believe they see things more clearly now than when they lived in the "darkness" of faith.

Before we trace the stages of the process that brings about sin-consciousness or "reveals sin," we must describe what this "Law" is that can break through the solid wall of presumption. When the term "the Law" is used to describe the agent that reveals sin, Luther is using shorthand for "the preached Law" or "the theological use of the Law," which he can also call the "chief" or "proper" use of the Law.[62] "The Law" which is to be preached so that it can be used "theologically" or "spiritually" to affect the human spirit or heart is nothing other than the natural law which is written into relational existence.[63] Only the natural demands of relational existence itself--whose center is the call for love born of trust--can shatter the artificial egocentric world which sin creates in opposition to creation. The fact of human sin does not cause God to change the laws and structures of created existence. He does not institute any new laws nor does he finally grant permission to objectify his natural law. Instead, he institutes the office of preaching the natural law. The Law does not change. But it takes on an additional function after sin, namely of confronting the "inner man" with his escape from creation and his escape from freedom and responsibility. This confrontation reveals the distrust of the inner man which is the key to man's way of responding to existence. To make the distinction between the role of the natural law in our projected "authentic existence" and in the actual sinful existence, we can say that previously the Law was an ongoing concrete address calling for ongoing responses of free activity. Now, after sin, the Law is an ongoing concrete address which reveals the false grounding of our spirit in ideas and works. It therefore serves *to reveal our inability to respond* and to show the spiritual basis for this inability. To its *moral function* as the natural imperative of existence is added the *spiritual function* of beginning the change of man's spirit, heart, or inner man.[64]

To carry out the spiritual function of the natural law, God has instituted the public office of preaching the Law.[65] While the Law in this particular use is "*God's* hammer" and God's means of beginning to re-create man, the office of making it present to people is given to humans--as are all the functions of "spiritual government." Luther understands the "giving of the Law" at Sinai to Moses as the institution of the human office to preach the natural law "spiritually."[66] "The awesome spectacle and the pomp with which God gave the Law on Mt. Sinai symbolize this use of the Law [of spiritually crushing the presumption of righteousness]."[67] This proper use of the "office of Moses," or of the preaching of the Law was quickly lost, already during Moses' time, since the people felt they could not endure it.[68] Moses veiled or masked "the theological message of the Law, or the living Law in experience" to make it tolerable.[69] As a result, the Law could no longer carry out its proper function, but became a moral code or a prescription of laws which makes men "smug, sleepy, and presumptuous hypocrites."[70] Christ, in contrast, does not mask the Law or change its voice. He lets it speak to the heart so that presumption is replaced by "terror" or anxiety. But more important, Christ then abolishes "the wrath of the Law" (i.e., *after* it has fulfilled its killing function).[71] Therefore today, "the Law has this [spiritual] function, which it had on Mt. Sinai, when it was first given. . . ."[72]

While the original function of the office of Moses must guide the present communication of the Law, it is important to recognize that different people in different situations require that the natural law be preached or communicated differently.[73] People in the present are not to be confused by being given many of the individual demands that Moses made of his people, nor should people try to identify the ills of their society, which must be uncovered today, with those of Moses' time. Luther explains the particular eminence of the "Decalogue" in the preaching of the Law in terms of the fact that it clearly expresses the need for all preaching of the Law to refer to the natural law.[74]

We can discern, in Luther's comments on the Law, two stages in the process by which "preaching" the natural law reveals sin. We can call the "stages" (a) confinement under law, and (b) merciful exposure of futile attempts to escape. As we can tell by this description of the two "stages" (or elements of a movement), the Law does not by itself lead to a true consciousness, or revelation, of sin. It only leads to the point of transition where this consciousness becomes possible--if hope is given through the promise of forgiveness. The true consciousness of sin comes at the same time as one accepts forgiveness or grace as the basis of one's worth.

a. Confinement under the Law

Man cannot become conscious of his sin as long as he lives in the illusory, seemingly controllable, world of presumption. In this self-made world, man justifies his actions by his own ideas. Therefore his conscience,[75] which approves or disapproves man's actions on the basis of his object of trust, will not sense that he has transgressed the natural law of relational existence in time. Man's conscience, which is presently controlled by some narrow prescription of life, must therefore be confined under the Law until such time as a consciousness of sin comes about.

It is the task of the "preaching" of the Law to bring about this confinement, i.e., consciousness of having transgressed the natural Law. ("Preaching" in this whole section refers to all intentional means by which God communicates the natural law to the conscience.) The conscience can only sense that it has not satisfied the natural Law, when we are led "forth from our tabernacles, that is, our peace and self-confidence," and set "into the sight of God."[76] The preaching of the Law leads us forth from our tabernacles of presumption of righteousness by bringing about a *change in the forum of our accountability*. Rather than allowing us to be responsible only to ourselves and our ideas, or to the judgments of society, we are placed "into the sight of God." Rather than allowing us to live *coram meipsum* or *coram mundo*, the Law has us live *coram deo*--to use Luther's traditional distinction amongst the three "forums" of our existence: self, world, and God.[77] The preaching of the Law can set people into the sight of God by being itself the "voice of God"--unless, of course, its voice is "changed" and it is presented as an improved moral code.[78] The preached Law is the voice of God by the very fact that it addresses a person with the ongoing calls to serve our neighbor which are given by our existence in multiple callings. It is in these natural claims of our various neighbors that the God *clothed in creation* "faces us."

The preaching of the Law does not have to use the term "God" to set us into the sight of God. Nor will it necessarily be any more effective in "getting through" the wall of presumption, if it calls the concrete claims "God's ongoing address." The hearers at this stage, whether religious or irreligious, will necessarily have a wrong notion of "God." They will be worshipping an invented form of God who exists nowhere. The whole communication of reversal is the battle against the false gods of distrust. Therefore a knowledge of God or faith in him cannot be the presupposition for "setting people into the sight of God" by means of preaching the Law. The effectiveness of the preached Law both in affecting the hearer's conscience and in beginning to correct his false notions of "God" comes from the naturalness of its claims. They are written into concrete social existence and into the human heart. It is in these concrete and natural claims that man encounters God by experiencing his own nonmastery of existence.

The change of the forums of accountability can only come from outside of the closed-system of sin. By himself, man does not hear the natural law any longer, since he has replaced it with his knowledge of good and evil. The natural law can only break into this system and place man into the sight of God if it is intentionally signified and held up to man who is trying to ignore it. In fending off intellectualistic misunderstandings of "the Law," Wingren has stressed that for Luther the natural law presses itself upon man in the earthly forms of vocation. Wingren says, "In one's vocation there is a cross--for prince, husband, father, daughter, for everyone--and on this cross the old human nature is to be crucified."[79] Under the "cross" are included even the most trivial difficulties--such as babies interfering with their parents' sleep--for all these difficulties in vocations battle against ego-centricity and pressure us to serve the "neighbor."

While this concrete dimension of the natural law battling sin or egocentric systems is important to Luther's notion of the "preaching" of the law, the concrete dimension has no automatically compelling force. It is exactly within a vocational existence that man can abuse his vocations in "presumption" or "despair." Or again, it is the pressure to serve against one's will which causes people to withdraw into their self-made worlds which they can control and in which they can choose their own works. Therefore it is at best questionable when Wingren says,

> In the Law which speaks in the vocations of men God compels man without the assent of his heart to serve others. Thereby the old man is crucified . . . and, through his cross, man himself is advanced on the way toward heaven and salvation, all by one concrete action of God.[80]

It is true that people serve others even against their will. However, this does not mean that at the same time the old self is being killed. It could just as well be strengthened in its presumption. The natural law must function theologically or spiritually to press itself in on man's conscience, if the old self is to die. Wingren acknowledges this.[81] However, he does not adequately express that the theological function of the natural law requires some form of signification. Man must somehow be enabled to look at the pressures of vocational life and the various experiences of his nonmastery in such a way that he reassesses his own perspective on existence (which is characterized by the illusory attempt at control). The form of this "looking" or "communicating" is not as important as the significatory dimension itself. That the natural law must be "preached" to be a challenge to one's present way of seeing existence means basically that man requires more than some immediate experience of pressure to serve and of nonmastery. He must be led to reflect on this experience. Details of this experience which he screens out by his narrow "controlling" perspective, must continually be brought to his attention until the controlled perspective breaks. Creation and its natural law can only become man's new forum of accountability which replaces an idea of the good, if the experiences of concrete existence are constantly being "brought into language" to confront the inner man and his interpretation of life.

If--by the power of the Holy Spirit--man begins to feel accountable to relational existence (the God clothed in creation) rather than to his own ideas, his conscience will feel "confined under the Law."[82] In this new forum, one "remembers" the concrete mandates one has transgressed.[83] Or one "senses" that one has not satisfied the Law.[84] The outward supports of one's presumption of righteousness crumble when one acknowledges the claims of the natural law, or of "the neighbor"--as claims which one has not fulfilled. However, the crumbling of the outward supports of presumption does not mean that as yet the inner way of measuring oneself by some legal standard has changed. Therefore the shattering of the supports of presumption leads to a sense of being condemned--by reality or by "God." Because man judges himself by his performance, the replacement of some narrow prescription of the good with the non-ending demands of the natural law will lead to a sense, not of being liberated from a narrow view of goodness, but of being imprisoned by the Law. Life itself seems to be accusing man, so that man begins to experience terror as he faces the possibility that he will never be able to justify himself before "the Law" of existence. Luther describes the "spiritual prison" of the Law as follows:

> The custody or prison (of the Law) signifies the true and spiritual terrors by which the conscience is so confined that it cannot find a place in the whole world where it can be safe. In fact, as long as these terrors last, the conscience feels such anxiety that even if heaven and earth were ten times as large and broad as they are, they would seem narrower than a mouse's hole. Then a man is simply deprived of all wisdom, power, righteousness, counsel, and help.[85]

This experience of anxiety and of the desire to withdraw from the world is the beginning of sin-consciousness. The real withdrawal from God and creation had occurred in the fall out of trust into distrust and a desire for control. Now after the outer wall of presumption is shattered, this withdrawal from uncontrollable reality, which distrust necessarily performs, is felt as a physical and emotional need to withdraw. One begins to feel that in distrust one cannot face the world and oneself as they are:

namely, something which can only be accepted in trust. One begins to feel how unsafe the uncontrollable world with its ongoing daily demands is for a distrusting inner man who desires control. The old self--which is the only self one knows at the present--is truly being threatened in its very life. Therefore it is understandable why man "would rather choose death than endure, even for a brief time, those terrors of the Law."[86] Since this absolute anxiety about the self's extinction in the face of existence (the clothed God) is intolerable, man will necessarily desire to escape this confinement--either by suicide, or, more often, by rationalizing his transgressions of the natural law. This points to a new dimension in the role of the preached Law.

b. The Law exposes rationalizations

The "old self"--which sinful man takes as his real or only self--is created by the inner man's activity of putting his trust in his own ability to create his own goodness. Man attempts to justify his existence before self, others, or God. The Law destroys man's ability to justify himself by his works. Unless man is given a perspective in which he can see a totally different basis for the self, or a different form of "being justified," he can only see and feel the Law as the deadly enemy of his self.[87] As long as man's self demands that he justify himself, he cannot admit his withdrawal from the natural law and from responsibility. To admit that one has sinned at one concrete point over against the natural law is to confess that one's whole approach of control, of choosing one's own works, and of serving others to prove oneself is sinful. As long as there was a timeless norm which could be fulfilled by specific outward works, an admission of what one thought was "sin"--namely that one had not quite lived up to the norm--was possible, since it did not challenge, but rather strengthened the basic approach of having to justify oneself by one's actions. As soon as one faces the natural law which demands a free activity born of trust, an admission of sin is a confession of one's distrust, a confession of the failure of one's legal-approach to God and others. This confession would be nothing less than pronouncing one's own death sentence.

"Because death is unbearable for human nature," according to Luther, "it begets despair and blasphemy."[88] Both "despair" and "blasphemy" are attempts to escape the Law's "ministry of death." People who feel thus confined and threatened by the Law "either hang themselves or curse God."[89] Suicide in this context is a last act of self-assertion or self-justification performed as an accusation of creation and its Creator who seems to have created us for destruction.[90] "Cursing God" is shorthand for man's attempt to escape the accusation of the Law by transferring the guilt of his sin to the structures of creation, present circumstances, and ultimately God as the originator of existence and of its natural law (which did not allow man to justify himself and maintain his moral innocence by his works).[91] It is this process of tracing one's sin to creation and God which Luther calls "blasphemy" or "cursing God." "Blasphemy" is "the last step of sin," i.e., its strongest expression, since it represents the furthest withdrawal of man from creation and God. In "blasphemy," man is asserting that he is morally innocent and that his approach to existence is right, even if it means that he has to accuse existence and its source as being monstrous.

If man is allowed to keep on fleeing from the God clothed in creation by "accusing God and excusing himself," he will end in "ultimate impenitence,"[92] i.e., in hardening himself against any attempts of God to break into his egocentric system. This progression of sin to impenitence, once one begins to feel sin in the conscience, indicates a new dimension to the role of preaching the Law. Luther puts it this way:

> Let us learn, therefore, that this is the nature of sin: unless God immediately provides a cure and calls the sinner back, he flees endlessly from God and, by excusing his sin with lies, heaps sin upon sin until he arrives at blasphemy and despair.[93]

The function of preaching the Law to those who already feel convicted of sin in their conscience is to "call sinners back" from their flight of endless excuses. "Calling the sinner back" is done by exposing his rationalizations for not accepting personal responsibility for his actions. While each time a rationalization is exposed, man again feels the confinement under the Law with all its terror, nevertheless, the activity of exposing excuses is "merciful." It is the only "cure" which can prevent man from ending either in complete despair or impenitence.

Luther illustrates how man keeps on avoiding to face up to his sin and how the Law must keep on counteracting this when he reflects on Adam's rationalizations for running away from God after he became conscious of his sin. We will trace the rationalizations and their exposure because they are a paradigm of preaching the Law to those who have lost their naive presumption of righteousness.

First of all, Adam attempts to hide physically and by means of clothing from the sight of God. God responds with the words, "Where are you?" These words, according to Luther, are words of the Law which God directs to the conscience. It is the same as if God were saying; "Do you think I do not see you?" "He wants to show Adam that though he had hidden, he was not hidden from God, and that when he avoided God, he did not escape God."[94]

Once this physical hiding or withdrawal is exposed as an impossibility, Adam tries to hide "verbally." He does not face up to God, whose voice is the voice of the Law. He does not admit that his conscience is convicting him of sin. "He says that the reason for his flight was not that he had sinned, but that he had heard the voice of the Lord and was frightened by it and became ashamed because of his nakedness." Adam is transferring his guilt away from himself. First he blames God's voice as the cause of his flight. This cannot be the true cause, since "previously he did not fear the voice but heard God with delight." Before sin and its revelation, the voice of God was the source of man's ability to live in confidence before God. Adam is clearly "looking for a fictitious reason as his excuse." He is trying to explain away that it is his heart, and not God, that has changed. Secondly, he blames his nakedness as a defense before the very God "who created him naked."[95] Clearly there must be a fictitious reason why man would be afraid on account of what God has made.

God, in his reply, exposes both excuses as fictitious reasons--thereby speaking again "words of the Law." God says,

> ". . . . But your nakedness is My creation. You are not condemning it as something shameful, are you? Therefore it was not the nakedness that perplexed you, it was not My voice that frightened you; but your conscience convicted you of sin because you ate the fruit from the forbidden tree."[96]

These words of the Law put Adam back into "the midst of death" and "the midst of hell." He is back in the spiritual prison which he was trying to escape by his rationalizations. The effectiveness of these words in exposing rationalizations lies in the fact that "Adam hears from the Lord his very thoughts."[97] His own conscience convicts him both of sin and of covering the sin with a lie. It is this inner conviction which God's words hold before Adam as an opportunity at self-examination and confession of sin.

However, even this effective preaching of the Law--whether done by God himself or some therapist--cannot bring about a confession of sin by itself, that is, without a word which is not accusing Law, but rather a word of mercy, grace, or hope of forgiveness. "Adam can in no wise be forced into a confession of his sin, but he denies his sin or excuses it as long as he sees that he has any hope or any kind of excuse left." Although his own conscience convicts him of sin and this same sin and self-deception is known and expressed by his "therapist" (if I may use the term to describe God's role in this paradigmatic case), Adam "wants to be regarded as pure and innocent."[98]

After his physical and verbal withdrawals have been exposed, Adam still cannot stop fleeing from the valid accusations of the Law. He is now forced to admit his actual transgression of God's law. But this does not mean that he will accept personal or moral responsibility for his actions. That is, to admit one's faults and failures is not the same as a confession of sin, since the admission can be coupled with a transference of guilt from oneself to the structures and circumstances of existence. In Adam's case, we can clearly see the desperation and self-deception involved when one is under the compulsion to uphold one's image as morally innocent after the outward supports of presumption of innocence have been shattered and the conscience feels the sin.

Luther's clearest illustration of the despairing claim to moral innocence comes in Adam's "second round" of transferring his guilt away from himself, this time to "the woman" God has given him. When Adam blames the woman who gave him the fruit, it is as if he were saying to God,

> "Thou hast burdened me with this trouble. If Thou hadst given the woman some garden of her own and hadst not burdened me by making me live with her, I would have remained without sin. Therefore the guilt for my having sinned is Thine, since Thou didst give me a wife."[99]

Here we have the paradigmatic combination of an admission of sin which is at the same time a claim to moral innocence. Adam does not accept the guilt of the action, for he claims to have been forced by God to act this way. Relational existence (which embodies God's natural law), and not man's desire to control life by his knowing and doing, is to bear the guilt. Although this claim to moral innocence is clearly an act of desperation and self-deception, man cannot act otherwise as long as the moral owning of one's faults and failures appears as the death of one's self and self-worth. The Law cannot bring about a confession of sin by itself.

We conclude: The preaching of the Law is a limited phase in the communication of reversal. Its necessary function is to reveal sin to man's own conscience--whether or not this will lead to a later confession of sin. The revealing of sin occurs in two "phases." First, the outward supports of presumption of righteousness have to be destroyed. Man's secure and mastered world has to be shattered, so that he experiences the inability of his distrust and his knowing and doing of "the good" to cope with actual, uncontrollable reality. The effectiveness of the Law depends on its ability to articulate the actual demands of relational living. The Law thus first removes man's unconsciousness of being a sinner. Secondly, the Law reveals the "inner presumption," i.e., man's fundamental need (within the world-view of sin) to maintain the self-image of moral innocence. The Law does this by exposing man's ongoing rationalizations of his sin. The role and effectiveness of the Law in dealing with man's inner source of presumption lies in echoing or articulating man's own thoughts. The Law confronts man with his own knowledge and sense of sin.

In both the "outer" and "inner" function of the preached Law, nothing is required as information that transcends what is concretely present either in existence or in man's own conscience and self-reflection. However in both challenges to presumption, the Law functions as that which transcends the closed-system of sin and its rationalizations. The Law comes from outside of the sinner.

In its total task, the preaching of the Law can only lead man to a point of transition, namely, the "spiritual prison" in which man encounters a new forum of accountability and in which he experiences despair. In his despair, man feels the inadequacy of his present way of interpreting life and grounding his self. He feels that his whole approach to life is being threatened. While this despair can lead to suicide or ultimate impenitence, it can also be a "healthy despair." It is "healthy" when, on the strength of the Gospel, it becomes a point of transition to a new grounding of the self in a word of grace.

3. The Gospel Leads to a Confession of Sin

Without "the Gospel and knowledge of grace"[100] or without "hope for the forgiveness of sins,"[101] man cannot confess his sin or give up his old self. Only when the old self dies can a new self of faith and responsibility be born. The Gospel, whose prime function it is to "make man alive," i.e., to re-create the authentic self, must enable man to let the old self die. Its promise of God's grace can only become the grounding of a trusting inner man as the promise makes a confession of sin possible.[102] The Law only leads to the point of transition. The Gospel allows the transition to occur. The transition or "reversal" is at the same time the death of the old self and birth of the new. There is no neutral space between the self trusting its own works and words to justify itself and the self trusting God's grace as the basis of its worth.

The Gospel is that communication which makes God's light of grace illumine sinners. It makes Christ, the revelation of God's grace, "there for you" by being a present, personal address. When God thus binds himself to a present "Word," you can know his will toward you with a certainty. The communication of the Word of grace leads you "outside of yourself," so that you do not put your trust in your own thoughts, works, or even in the experiences of your conscience, but rather in this certain Word. The Word of grace thus becomes the basis of a self grounded in the well-meaning God. -- All this we have already heard, when describing the Word of promise (which is always the promise of grace) as that which creates the trusting inner man.[103] We have also described the indirect form of intentionally communicating God's grace to people--irrespective of their innocence or sinfulness.[104] The Word of grace always interprets concrete existence and its natural law in reference to a hidden well-meaning God. Only those who respond by free activity to concrete existence have understood and appropriated the perspective of the Word. Because of its indirect nature, the Word creates faith and responsibility.

All that was said about the Word of promise in terms of function and nature applies to the Gospel, since the revelation of Christ is that God's grace is neither earned by good works nor delayed by sin. The only thing that has not yet been explored is how the Word of grace gains control of man's heart or of his conscience when it is ruled by the spiritual Law. What has to be explored from the hearer's perspective is how someone who experiences existence and its demands as an accusatory Law and a threat to the self can come to accept existence as the good creation of a well-meaning God. What enables man to stop fleeing existence or blaming existence for his failures and anxiety? A reversal is necessary in which man accepts the guilt or blame for his actions himself. He has to confess his sin to be able to accept existence as "good." Once the source of evil and the abuse of the created orders is acknowledged to be in the human heart, then man no longer has to blame his "body," "woman" and all of relational existence, nor God, the Creator of all of these, He can accept his past and take future responsibility.

How, then, does the Gospel enable man to confess his sin? Luther gives pastoral advice on how the Gospel helps those who feel confined in the "theological prison" of the Law. What the Gospel has to address is man's feeling that the accusation of existence and his anxiety will be forever--unless he escapes by self-deception. The Gospel has to communicate that the prison or the time of the Law has only a limited place and time. Luther continues,

> Therefore the heart that has been confined under the Law should be encouraged and comforted this way: "Brother, you have indeed been confined. But you should know that this is not being done so that you will be held in the confinement of this prison forever, for it is written that we are confined until faith should be revealed. Therefore you are being afflicted by this prison, not to do you harm but to recreate you through the Blessed Offspring. . . . For God does not want to trouble you in such a way that you remain in trouble; He does not want to kill you in such a way that you remain in death. . . . But He wants to trouble you so that you may be humbled and may acknowledge that you need the mercy of God and the blessing of Christ."[105]

In this example of the function of the Gospel, we see that it helps people overcome the terror of the Law or their anxiety about personal/moral responsibility for their actions, not by removing the Law, but by removing its power to drive man to unhealthy despair. The Gospel does not change the Law, but the way it appears to man. The Gospel reinterprets a sinner's experience with the Law and with unadmitted sin-consciousness. It announces the broader, but hidden, context of the experience that one's (old) self is threatened with death by existence and its Law. This broader context is the will of a well-meaning, merciful God who wants to recreate man into a trusting being.

The communication of the Gospel is necessary to announce this hidden context of one's experience, since man, blinded by sin, does not know or see that he is surrounded by expressions of a good God's fatherly concern. For example, Adam, our paradigm of the sinner, was given many signs of God's fatherly disposition.[106] "A sure indication" of God's mercy which reveals God's love toward the whole human race is that "even after sin the human being is sought and called. . . ."[107] The fact that the sinner is not left to self-deception and to the endless flight from reality, but is "called back" by the institution of the preaching of the Law, is a sign of God's mercy. However, Adam, or any "old self," "does not understand or see this fatherly concern, since he is overwhelmed by his sin and terror."[108] The grace-dimension of one's experience with an accusing reality (i.e., "the Law") must be intentionally communicated and pointed out to the person who feels his sin.

The sinner also does not know, see, or feel that another grounding of the self is possible in which one does not have to be the source of one's own worth and goodness. The Gospel has to announce that man can only rely on "the mercy of God and the blessing of Christ" rather than on his own efforts and ideas. It offers man a god-relationship of "grace," rather than "works." The gracious will of God is offered as the justification of man's existence, rather than man having to justify himself by what he does or says.[109]

The sinner can only accept the Gospel's interpretation of his experience with the Law and receive the possibility of a new grounding of the self by the act of confessing his sin. In the act of confession, the legal system of creating one's own goodness or worth is broken. It is the end of the presumptuous opinion of the heart, "which refuses to be sinful, impure, miserable, and damned but wants to be [self-] righteous and holy."[110] In the act of confession, man truly becomes a sinner in his own eyes--rather than "morally" innocent. He now owns his sin and accepts responsibility for his actions. By becoming irrevocably a sinner, man expresses that the source of his worth is definitely not in him, but in the gracious will of his Creator. That man has to become a sinner in his own estimation of himself so that "grace can have access to us," shows that the process of inner reversal is the death of the old self and the creation of a new self "out of nothing"--i.e., out of sin.[111]

This complete discontinuity in the source of one's worth contrasts sharply with any "gradual moral improvement models." In the latter, one admits imperfection when the conscience is accused by the Law. But one does not own oneself as sinner and therefore does not break with the legal system. In such a case, "the heart not only does not take hold of the doctrine of grace, which gives a sure promise and offer of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ, but it actually looks for more laws to help out."[112] Luther characterizes this opinion of the heart as claiming, "If I live longer, . . . I shall improve myself. I shall do this and that."[113] Here one does not confess one's sin in the trust that God justifies sinners--which implies the end of all self-justification. Rather one admits sins as an impetus or motive to gradually improve oneself and to attempt to justify oneself.

Once man shifts his trust from himself to the mercy of God--which occurs in the confession of sin--, he is restored to the faith and freedom which belongs to authentic man's nature. Faith, as we know,[114] incarnates itself in works which are free responses to the daily demands of relational existence. Luther calls this new found freedom-to-be-responsible by the easily misunderstood name of "freedom from the Law." Christ, who is God's Word of grace distributed to people by the spoken Word of the Gospel, has "truly abolished the entire Law," says Luther.[115] If we take hold of Christ by faith or "live with him," we also, continues Luther, are free of the Law. For "where the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17)."[116] The term "freedom" in this context expresses that the confession of sin, and the acceptance of grace as the key to one's god-relationship, is the liberation from the "custody" or confinement of the conscience under the theological use of the Law. As soon as one stops fleeing its valid representation of our sin and faces up to one's sin, one is in fact free from the terror the Law inspired in the conscience. The conscience gains a new confidence before God, not because of man's works, but because man ceases to attempt to justify his existence and its failures. "The Law" no longer has the power to threaten man's worth and identity, since these are hidden in the Word of grace. We notice that the phrase about Christ abolishing the entire Law is again Luther's shorthand. What Christ actually abolishes is "all the claims of the Law upon the conscience."[117] The conscience is now ruled by faith; or better: it is Christ "who now reigns sweetly in us by His Spirit."[118] The conscience must be "dead toward the Law,"[119] for only then does it replace anxiety with the confidence which is necessary for a free doing of the natural law. The confession of sin ends the spiritual function of the natural law, so that man is free to respond to it as the moral imperative of existence. Thus the Gospel and its reception in the confession of sin gives man a "freedom from the Law" which restores man to live in communication with the concrete and temporal as God's ongoing commands.

In sum: The Gospel re-interprets man's experience with the spiritual prison of the Law by announcing God's gracious will as source and purpose of this experience. If man accepts this interpretation, he can break out of the prison, not by flight, but by a confession of sin. The confession is the break with the legal system of establishing one's own goodness. The break with this system frees man from judging his worth by the performance of the Law. As a result he becomes free from the anxiety about responsibility and free to respond to concrete tasks of the natural law.

4. Daily Reversals

The reversal from sin to faith in the confession of sin changes the nature of man by changing the nature of the "inner man" or the grounding of the self. This change is not an ontological change, but a change in one's way of interpreting, and responding to, existence. The initial confession of sin, therefore, is not a one-time conversion which brings about a change in man by changing his natural endowments such as adding some intrinsic quality of doing good called "faith" to his other qualities. Rather the first confession is the acceptance of a new way of interpreting one's experience with both the accusation of the Law and with its natural (moral) demands. Man has received, from outside of his ego-centric, narrow world-view, the new possibility of interpreting existence in the light of a gracious God as its source. The possibility of interpreting one's experiences--including the experience of being held accountable to the neighbor and of being accused in one's failure to respond to the neighbor--in terms of trust in a merciful God, rather than in terms of trust in one's own works and goodness is only real and useful to man, as it is actualized in each new task and challenge of daily life. Man must keep on actualizing the possibility of a faith-interpretation in face of the ongoing possibility of employing the familiar sin-interpretation. Before sin was revealed and confessed, man had only the one possibility for seeing and doing, namely, the ego-centric one. After confession, man lives continually between a conflict of interpretations. Man can only live by faith in God's grace through ongoing reversals. He must keep on letting the theological use of the Law destroy the view of sin, so that he can be freed to respond in trust. The time of the Law and the time of grace are "in constant alternation" in any Christian who lives by faith.[120]

The daily experience of the alternation of "Law" and "grace" which brings about the ongoing reversals does not fragment man's new self. Man's new identity is "outside himself" in God's Word of grace. This grace is "forever."[121] It gives human existence an ongoing worth and meaning which is independent of man's fluctuating "performance." When man receives and accepts the Promise as the continuity of his self, he is freed to accept the discontinuity of ongoing reversals. Not only is man freed to accept discontinuity, but he must keep on going through the reversals to actualize the Promise as his new continuity. Only when man uses "the Law" to keep on shattering the presumptuous continuities one is always tempted to establish in one's ideas of "the good" and in one's "good works," and, only when he then uses "the Gospel" as the basis for putting his trust in God's mercy and wisdom, does he have the Promise as the continuity of his self. There is, thus, a double movement involved when faith in the Promise of grace is to be one's new continuity, in contrast to the "static" continuity of one's ideas or "works." Luther can call this double movement the Christian's continuous double sacrifice:

> The evening sacrifice is to kill the (presumptuous) reason, and the morning sacrifice is to glorify God. Thus a Christian is involved,

daily and perpetually, in this double sacrifice and in its practice.[122]

The "reason" which must continually be killed is both one's temptation to credit oneself with the successful performance of tasks and the equal temptation to despair when the conscience is accused of real sin. Christ has abolished the claims of the Law on the conscience. Thus the conscience should be dead toward the Law. But this "deadness" requires that the daily mortification of false reason by the Law be followed by "the daily coming of Christ."[123] It is by this process of daily reversal that freedom rules the conscience--and man is maintained in the freedom to be responsible.

The need for ongoing reversals or daily conversions also does not fragment man's outer or "social" works. The continuity of the works, however, is not that of a timeless prescription for life or of a set of ideals to which man commits himself--against the movement of life in time. The new continuity of works is that "a man [is set] apart from his own [self-chosen] works for the works of God."[124] It is the will of the Creator which is to be the continuity of man's actions. And this can only be the source and purpose of man's actions, if he continually lets existence in time force him to rest from his "own works," i.e., those which he chooses himself and those which he ascribes to his own worth. It is only the "spiritual man,"--the man of faith who interprets existence by means of "Law and Gospel" or by "death of the old and birth of the new"--who will receive the difficulties, burdens, and suffering in his various vocations as a necessary mortification of egocentricity, so that God can rule his life.[125] The mortification is the first of the double movements of doing in faith. It is followed by a new responsiveness to what the concrete and time call for. The double movement of doing in faith is necessary, if existence in time is indeed going to be God's ongoing address to us--calling for faith and responsive-responsibility.

In sum: man's search for a self-made continuity must be constantly torn apart by "Law and Gospel," "death and new birth," so that God can guide our becoming according to his constant gracious will. To live in communication with God is thus to live by means of a daily conversion to reality.

In looking back at the dialectic of "Law and Gospel," we see that the one word of grace requires an intricate process, if it is to be heard and accepted by sinful humans. There is no direct way of communicating grace either by words or by actions. The perspective of sin is the block to such attempts. This perspective must be shattered before one can accept the word of grace. And to accept grace implies that one accepts oneself as a sinner, i.e., as morally responsible for one's failure to love one's neighbors. Only as a reversal takes place in the "hearer," can the word of God's grace be understood.

The reversal in the "hearer's" way of finding a justification of his life occurs through God's means of grace, namely, "Law and Gospel." The task of "the Law" is to shatter the perspective of sin by pointing people to the natural law of love that is written into their own relational lives. It is the reality of daily life and its call to service that alone can expose the narrowness of the self-justifying perspective on life.

By itself "the Law" as an articulation of daily realities and imperatives can only bring about anxiety and a sense of disorientation in a person. To discover that one's world-view is shattering does not give a person the ability to look at life in a new way. At best, it leads to patch-work attempts at salvaging some remnants of one's familiar and secure world--in the form of self-deception and rationalizations. "The Gospel's" ministry is necessary to provide the possibility for a new way of looking at life. It points to a gracious God as the source of all of life, even of the experience that life is accusing us of our failure to love. As a witness to God's grace, the Gospel provides us with a new source of worth and self-identity. No longer do we have to rely on our performance to give life meaning and continuity.

In face of the possibility which "the Gospel" provides, we can confess our sin and thereby give up our old way of looking at daily life. This confession frees us to respond to the challenges of life on the basis of trust in God and love for the neighbor. Each new situation and each new challenge confronts us with the possibility of responding in faith and freedom or of responding according to our desire for security and personal continuity. Thus the dialectic of "Law and Gospel" and of "death of the old and birth of the new" accompanies us throughout life. Our whole life is a process of becoming which is marked by ongoing reversals.

CONCLUSION

Luther's theological reflection leads us to the same conclusion as the one Sallie McFague reached when studying biblical parables, namely: Christianity is wedded to indirection. Luther's thought shows us that the metaphorical and indirect method of communication which Jesus and the Early Church uses--in parables, stories, and lived lives--is not an arbitrary technique that could outlive its usefulness for contemporary humans. Rather indirect communication is rooted in creation and branches out for the re-creation of sinful humans.

Creation--as the natural and social realities and dynamics of human life in the world--is itself the communication process between God and humans. God's eternal essence and will is beyond what any finite and creaturely mind can grasp. There is a permanent epistemological gap between human, temporal minds and the ultimately real and true. However, this gap does not exclude humans from being shaped by, and relating to, ultimate reality and truth. God shapes humans and relates to them by clothing himself in creation. He faces humans in the orders and dynamics of nature and society, of the natural and the moral realm. Humans relate to God, and respond to God, not by gaining some observer knowledge of a divine being, but by responding to the gifts and challenges of daily life with trust in the Creator's good intentions and with love toward their neighbors. Both trust and love bind humans to creation. Trusting the Creator and serving one's neighbors in the many roles and relationships of daily life are two sides of the same coin. True faith always becomes incarnate in works of love. And love is always a way of dealing with daily vocations. At no point of their relationship to God can humans transcend the realm of creation.

If even the believer can never transcend the realm of creation or historical realities in relating to God, then the communication between God and humans is necessarily and always indirect. Any direct perception or knowledge of God and his eternal will is made impossible--both by God's nature as ongoing Creator and by our nature as creatures who are bound into creation and time.

Instead of direct knowledge, the relationship between God and humans is one of "Word and faith," according to Luther. The Word provides us with the promise that the Creator of our world and its dynamics means us well. This promise becomes the context or frame within which we view the occurrences of life, if we trust the Word. The Word does not let us gain direct knowledge of God. The Word as promise rather makes a way of looking at created existence possible. Our focus remains on the realities of life. The truth of the promise can only be verified as we respond to the demands of life according to the way faith looks at them. God's Word thus does not inform the mind with religious concepts but inspires the heart with confidence in the Creator's ways. The Word's aim is not knowledge, but faith.

Where creation and the Word are God's only means of communicating with his creatures, there distrust and the misuse of the created orders of life are always possible. When God intends humans to be free and willing co-creators of a humane life with him, then it is always possible that we misuse this freedom and live in the illusion that _we_ are the masters of life. Indirect communication, in contrast to a divine compulsion, always allows sin to be a possibility.

The observation that all humans not only have the possibility of distrusting the hidden Creator and placing their trust in their own ideas and actions, but actually do so, leads Luther to a central insight into the form or mode of Christian communication. Christian communication to sinful humans must seek to bring about a reversal of perspectives, since sin is itself a way of looking at life that blocks out the view of faith. In the view of sin, human desires, ideas, or ideals replace the Word of promise as the key for interpreting the situations and challenges of life. As a result, people fall in love with their own ideas about life, themselves, others, and God. They become blind to many of the realities of daily life and they become deaf to the moral imperative to serve their neighbors within the relational orders of life. Only when the self-centered view of sin is torn apart can creation and its realities and imperatives again become God's communication with humans. Christian communication must bring about a reversal from ideas to created existence as the point of encounter with God.

To bring about a reversal of perspectives, Christian communication must be a dialectical process which Luther calls "Law and Gospel." "The Law" refers to the need of Christian communicators to articulate the natural moral law of relational living in such a way that it shatters the narrow and controlling view of sin. The "hearer" must be led to the experience that he is incapable of responding to the natural law, that is, incapable of loving, as long as he distrusts the source of the natural law. His defenses--of presumed knowledge and presumed righteousness--will break down when life itself with its demand for love and personal responsibility begins to challenge and threaten him. Only life itself, God in creation, can fight against the fortress of ideas which isolate people in their sin.

The "preaching of the Law" can only lead to anxiety and disorientation, since its only target is to break down the presumptuous perspective of sin. Beyond confronting "the hearer" with the law of love that is written into social existence, the Christian communicator must therefore announce the promise of God's gracious and forgiving intentions toward sinful humans. The promise of grace is offered as a new context or frame for viewing oneself, others, life, and God. "The hearer" can only grasp this new way of looking at life by confessing his own sin and thereby relying on God's grace for his sense of worth. The acceptance of grace only becomes actual, as the individual responds to the ambiguous situations of daily life with the free activity of love.

In conclusion, we can see that Christian communication must be in the realm of indirection both because of God's nature as Creator and Redeemer and because of man's nature as dependent yet responsible creature and as sinner. The key tenets of a Christian theology and anthropology indicate the need for indirect communication.

PART II

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

We have established, by means of theological reflection, that true Christian communication must be indirect. This theological insight must lead us to re-examine the practical disciplines of Christian communication, such as preaching, teaching, or counseling. If our theological insight is correct, then the theory and practice of actual Christian communication must be guided by it. In this part, I propose to apply the notion of indirect communication to the task of Christian education. By evaluating the educational models of George Albert Coe and Randolph Crump Miller and by uncovering basic elements of a theologically adequate theory of Christian education, I hope to show the usefulness of using the notion of indirect communication as our guide.

In relating the notion of indirect communication to Christian education, our focus will not be on the content, but on the aims and processes of education. In the aims and processes we can most readily discern the form or model of communication that is being used: either direct or indirect. We will explore how God, daily existence, and persons are related to one another in the models of Christian education we are examining or proposing. We must ask ourselves the following questions: Is God accessible to the learners in intellectual concepts or in a body of religious truths, or is created existence itself the point of encounter between God and humans? Does a given educational model assume that the learners have some direct access to God--in observation, reason, feelings, or intuition--, or does God remain hidden from any direct perception? Do the educational processes deal with the possibility and actuality of human sin as an egocentric way of looking at life which competes with the view of faith? Or do they overlook the fact that the learners can only grow or "develop" toward a mature faith and personhood by ongoing reversals of perspective? In each of these questions we can see the difference between a direct and an indirect mode of Christian education.

In the first two chapters of this part, I will give an exposition and critical evaluation of the models of Christian or religious education which Coe and Miller have proposed. Each chapter will be divided into four sections. First, I will give a brief account of some of the major philosophic and/or theological assumptions of the respective educational theorists. These assumptions give us a good indication whether or not their theology and epistemology is open to indirection as the way God and humans relate to one another. Secondly, I will discuss their respective aims for Christian education. Thirdly, I will describe the processes by which they hope to accomplish their aims. Finally, I will evaluate their aims and processes in terms of their ability to overcome direct communication, which both of them in varying ways attempt to do. I will highlight the strengths of their models which we must preserve in any future designs. And I will surface their weaknesses, that is, the pitfalls we must avoid, if we are committed to indirection as the true mode of Christian communication.

In the last chapter of this part, I will first present a section on philosophic/theological assumptions that should guide our development of theologically adequate models of Christian education. Many of the insights are gleaned from Luther and our two exemplary theorists. I will then sketch an educational aim and major elements of an educational process that can reach this aim. In sketching major elements of the educational process, I will focus primarily on how one can assist a reversal of perspectives to occur, since it is this central part of indirect communication with which Coe and Miller have not dealt.

CHAPTER IV

A SOCIAL THEORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. The New Philosophy of Religious Education

It is the lasting contribution of the nascent Religious Education Movement at the beginning of this Century, and of George Albert Coe, its first major theorist, to have shifted the attention of religious educators, away from a narrow focus on a specific content to be transmitted, toward the purpose religion has for living. The educational aims and processes must allow this role of religion in life to become effective. By attempting to discover the aims and processes of religious education in the needs and possibilities of human living, Coe set out to overcome "the deadly separation of knowing from doing."[1] This "deadly separation" was prevalent in the Christian instruction of the time, since its aim was to transmit a body of religious truths and of prescribed moral duties to the mind of the learners. The gap between the learners' knowledge of religious ideas and duties, on the one hand, and the learners' actual daily practice, on the other, did not lead the Christian educators to reexamine their aims and processes, since they believed that "religion is caught and not taught."[2] This belief allowed educators to be satisfied with the attempt "to transfer to the child's mind certain truths" on the hope that they "will enter into his experience in a vital manner at some indefinite future time."[3] Coe remarks that in such an approach to Christian education, the aim is unsteady and the process is inconsistent with what one hopes for.

How does Coe propose to overcome these inconsistencies? Coe plans to ground religious education in the basic phenomena and needs of human existence in the world. He became an early spokesperson for the new philosophy in religious education that was committed to this approach. Thus he wrote in 1904 what can be considered as a manifesto of the Religious Education Movement in his essay "The Philosophy of the Movement for Religious Education." We can uncover the three basic elements of Coe's thought in this essay and therefore come to understand how he proposes to develop a form of religious education which is not divorced from actual human living.

In his essay, Coe first points out the roots religious education has in the teleological dimension of the cosmos and, with it, of the evolving human species. Coe argues that human life in the world must be viewed teleologically, i.e., as moving toward deliberate ends. We can see this, if we consider the phenomenon that humans deliberately choose to educate one another. Nature in the form of a volitional human mind is taking conscious charge and control of herself.[4] The human will as an aspect of mind can choose between different purposes or ends and deliberately move the development of the human species--particularly in the area of social living--toward these ends. Natural evolution, which occurs constantly, is no longer merely a matter of mechanical forces or laws exerting their pressure on the species and the cosmos. Rather the human will and its deliberate choices are a new factor in nature's evolving. The world and its humans develop by "purposed evolution."[5]

Religion has its roots in this teleology of the cosmos, since it deals with the human awareness of--and participation in--that ultimate will or purpose which is working itself out in the deliberate choices of humans. Religion is an operation of the mind and therefore "has a place no longer outside but inside our notion of mind and its laws."[6] By having linked religion with the processes of nature, Coe feels that we do not need supernatural presuppositions and supernaturally revealed truths to be authentic humans. For him, "the religious life of each of us is continuous with nature as a whole."[7] This is so, because the process of nature is that of purposed evolution and religion deals with ultimate purposes and the process of choosing ends.

Not only religion, but also religious education is a natural element in the process of purposed evolution. Education is the central power in moving evolution forward by means of deliberate choices. Any real education is therefore religious insofar as it helps to move humans and their world toward its ultimate purpose. Is there then any need for an explicit religious education, if any good education deals with deliberate human choices as a part of purposed evolution? Coe answers, "What distinguishes the religious variety [of education] from any other is simply the fact that it explicitly recognizes the teleology that is implicit in the notion of education, and therefore undertakes to assist the child to identify his will with the universal Over-will."[8]

Thus the first element in Coe's thought is that religion and religious education are a necessary part of nature, since nature is evolving by means of human choices.

The second ingredient for Coe's philosophy of religious education is an idealistic ontology. With this ontology, Coe hopes to answer the question, How is human thinking and choosing "religious," i.e., an awareness and choosing of what is ultimately real and good, rather than what is purely subjective? Coe claims that modern psychology and metaphysical idealists have "discovered" that there is an ontological element in cognition. These scholars seem to have proven that cognition is not a mere subjective imaging of nature, but rather is a "participation in the process of reality itself."[9] Thinking is neither the projection of illusory images, nor a total reaction upon reality."[10] Therefore there is no epistemological gap between creaturely minds and reality itself as it works itself out in time. Man can actually know reality itself in the form of ideas. More than that, reality is "actually known in all knowledge whatever."[11] This epistemology implies that man's thinking and deliberate choosing is guided by the basic purposes which give the cosmos its direction toward its ultimate purpose. The universal Over-will is guiding man's will-acts of thinking and choosing and thus man can actually know ultimate reality, or this "divine principle" of existence. When mind functions "correctly"--i.e., "objectively," as Coe says in later years--, it is indeed an exercise of religion, since it becomes aware of, and participates in, the ultimate movement and purpose of the cosmos.

Thus the second element by which Coe hopes to tie religion to natural processes is by an idealistic ontology. The natural process of thinking--if done correctly--is in touch with ultimate reality and is therefore religious.

A corollary to this second element is the notion that God is immanent. This is the theistic conclusion of the idealistic notion that our mind is directly related to the universal "mind" or "will."[12] God is the immanent principle of the evolutionary unfolding of the cosmos. God is not super-natural but natural. He is the principle of purposed evolution which is particularly the evolution of mind toward social purposes. To express his concept of mental and social evolution, Coe can therefore use the following theistic image: ". . . God is working through our reason and will to carry forward this plan [i.e., of leading us to know and choose a society of persons as the real]."[13]

If God is the immanent principle of our, and the world's, unfolding, then the distinction between religious and secular education lapses.[14] Any education which does not arrest our development but assists it is at least implicitly dealing with the God in us. Religious education is possible and necessary for human existence, because education is necessary for human development. And education, once it becomes conscious of its own role in a cosmic process, is religious. Thus anything which truly educates man is "religious" education or "a divine operation in men."[15] Coe illustrates the scope of divine education as follows:

> Nerve and sinew, physical forces and physical things, industry, commerce, politics--all these are included within the divine system of human education. We merely obey the divine decrees written in our members when we train hand, eye, and judgment to do everyday tasks of life. Indeed it adds to the significance of all these things to see in them a divine presence and the means of a divine destiny.[16]

Thus Coe's corollary to his idealistic ontology is the notion of the immanence of God. Religious education, both in the broad sense as the development of humans, and in the narrow sense as providing an awareness of divine presence and destiny is rooted in this immanence of God.

The third element of the new philosophy for religious education is Coe's definition of the direction evolution is taking. Since, according to Coe, the human mind moves within reality and evolves toward its own ultimate end, one can use the thoughts and insights of various scholarly disciplines in the present to uncover the direction evolution is taking. Whether one looks at present (late 19th Century--early 20th Century) thought in educational philosophy, in philosophic idealism, in the new ethics, in modern psychology, or in modern philosophy of religion and

Christianity, one becomes aware of a shift away from individual to social purposes. This shift corresponds to man's mental development, in which the growth of self-consciousness is at the same time growth of social consciousness.[17] "Every child that develops normally," says Coe, "is moving out of animality toward spirituality, out of egoism toward social self-realization, out of the life of sense into the life of the spirit."[18] The human species and the individuals today are moving toward a recognition of persons, of others, as "reals" who give each other reality. Thus various disciplines provide accumulated data for accepting a personal or social idealism as the description of evolution's direction.

Personal idealism--as Coe sees it in a popularization of Hegel--"views reality as consisting of a society of persons having their being in and through one supreme person."[19] Coe also finds that the philosophy of Christianity centers in the principle of personality as being the guiding force in the development of humans. Christ is the paradigm that the divine always reveals itself through human personality.[20] Human personality is the great objective as well as subjective force in the evolution which human education carries out.[21]

To define the direction of purposed evolution is tantamount to defining the purpose of religious education. The purpose of religious education and evolution are the same. As Coe puts it: "If reality is a society having the ground of its unity in a universal person, then, indeed, education and evolution are one process, and the social end of education is one with the cosmic laws involved."[22]

Thus the third ingredient of Coe's philosophy for religious education is his ability to define the direction or even end-product of evolution. Evolution, and religious education as its vehicle, lead people to the acceptance of social ideals as their own purposes.

The basic parameters of Coe's philosophy of religious education are now clear. Religion is a process of nature, since it is a function of the human mind. The human mind deliberately chooses one set of ends over against other ends. Discriminate choosing leads human evolution, and that of the whole cosmos, forward toward its ultimate purpose. The discriminate choosing of ends is man's direct access to the immanent divine principle of the cosmos, since, according to Coe's idealistic ontology, the human mind moves within reality and is guided by the ultimately real. The universal Over-will is the choice within our choices. A study of the development of human purposes can show us the direction in which life is evolving. The movement seems to be away from individualistic to social ends. Any deliberate education should seek to carry forward the purposed evolution of life toward the ends one can discern. Religious education is therefore basically the process by which evolution reaches its goal. It is an education of the human mind to choose real ends, namely, to choose social ideals over against self-centered desires. By helping the child to choose social ends, religious education is in fact assisting the child to identify his will with God's social will. The worship of a God who values persons as being at the heart of the universe's unfolding adds significance and intensity to one's choosing the personality principle as one's ultimate value. It brings about a devotion to the value and at the same time allows the learner to realize that a divine destiny is working itself out in his choosing.

Coe has attempted to overcome the "deadly separation of knowing from doing" in religious education by laying the foundation for his educational theory in natural processes of human life. He focuses on the processes of the human mind, one of whose functions is that of discriminately choosing the ends of one's actions. Whether this focus on the mind allows Coe to overcome the basic problems associated with teaching religious and moral knowledge remains to be seen, as we now turn to examine the concrete aims and processes which he proposes for religious or Christian education.[23] We must ask ourselves whether Coe has really overcome a knowledge-model of religious education, with its resulting separation of knowing from daily living, or whether he has merely found a new way for the mind to discover ultimate truths and moral norms.

2. The Aim of Christian Education: Social Training of the Human Mind

Coe's new philosophy for religious education dictates that the aim for religious or Christian education must be to assist learners in developing or training their minds to prefer social over egoistic ends in their daily decisions and conduct. To unfold this aim as an aim of the Church's education, we must first understand the educational aim of society, for, as we heard, any "real" education is implicitly religious.

The aim of society's education. What does society aim at doing by means of education? In A Social Theory of Religious Education, Coe says, "Education, in the broadest sense of the term, takes place wherever a plastic mind acquires a set of any kind."[24] Within this broad definition, nature, or a child's varying contacts with nature, can be the source of much education. Although Coe does not say it in this context, nature's education is not yet distinctively human education. Nature educates by regulating the desires and instincts of any creature as it comes up against the basic laws of nature. To have the preferences of one's mind regulated by outside circumstances is characteristic of the developmental phase of animality in humans.[25] Since Coe is interested in distinctively human development, he narrows down the meaning of the term "education" to refer to "the contribution made by society to the set of a mind."[26] It is only through the association with his elders that a child can attain to civilized life at all, since it is the encounter with the values and preferences of others that make a person aware of his own preferences, guide his preferences to consider others, and give his preferences a basis in reality. It is a society of persons which forms the minds of individuals, or which "civilizes the child's native impulses."[27] The "education" which the child receives from "elders" or "society" is "the total difference that such association makes in the organization and outlook of his mind."[28]

Society's education is in a large measure unsystematic and unintended. The child's organization of values and preferences is shaped by such diverse influences as newspaper morality, public amusement, business and social customs, changing public opinion, home conditions--indeed, by the influence "of every man and of every 'man way' that he meets."[29] Because of this confused and often contradictory molding of a child's mind that occurs from the unintentional education of living in society, an intentional or deliberate education becomes necessary. Society must take the task of giving a set to young minds consciously in hand. It must decide what kind of persons it wants its young to become. Society must deliberately decide what values or desires are to be the organizing principles in the minds of the young. Society's deliberate education of its young becomes "socially organized desire that certain desires rather than others should control human life."[30] Thus the deliberate education of society is the means by which the next generation evolves into better humans and a better society, because society decided which ideals or values are worth preserving and which should take top priority. Education is to be the means of moving forward human evolution by letting the ideal control the actual--and Coe admits that this description of the role of society's education is itself an idealization with the hope that it will control actual teaching in the future.[31]

If the role of society's deliberate education is both to perpetuate the good values it has achieved and to transform itself by letting the ideal control the actual in the lives of the next generation, then we can appreciate Coe's two fundamental aims for deliberate education. The first aim is "'social adjustment and social efficiency'"[32]; the second is "the progressive reconstruction of society."[33]

The aim of social adjustment and social efficiency is formulated by Coe to move beyond such narrow (and un-social) aims of education as saying that the purpose of education is basically to unfold the innate powers of the child.[34] Such a statement of purpose leaves out the ends or purposes for which this development is to take place. What are the ends to which the child's growing powers are to be applied? What is the context of a child's self-realization? The notion of "education" itself implies for Coe that an individual could become different "selves" as he develops. Education must therefore deliberately control what kind of a "self" the learner is to develop into. In contrast to narrow, developmental descriptions, the aim of social adjustment and efficiency indicates that the primary task of education is to assist children in becoming socially useful selves. They should learn to apply their developing powers "to the maintenance and the increase of human welfare of whatever sort."[35]

The child will apply its energies for human or social welfare only if it is "socially adjusted," rather than living by and for itself. Education therefore must bring the child and society together. "It [i.e., education] increases one's participation in the common life," says Coe.[36] He describes part of the social-adjustment task of education as follows:

> It [i.e., education] puts a child into possession of the tools of social intercourse, such as language and numbers; opens his eyes to treasures of literature, art, and science that society has gradually accumulated through generations; causes him to appreciate such social organizations as the state, and develops habits appropriate thereto; prepares him to be a producer in some socially valuable field of labor, and evokes an inner control whereby he may judge and guide himself in the interest of social well being.[37]

The first aim of education is therefore nothing less than organizing the mind and outlook of children in such a way that the well-being of their fellows is their prime concern. Devotion to "the social weal" is to become their life's purpose--which points to the religious dimension of society's education.

The second aim, "the progressive reconstruction of society," is made necessary by the first. The first aim cannot be reached, if one adjusts a child "to society just as it is."[38] In actual society, the child will encounter a lot of self-interest rather than only concern for others. There are many elements in the actual social organization which depreciate the value of persons. Education must therefore select some parts of the actual society for preservation while it condemns other parts. By supporting a deliberate education, such as in schools, society is in fact making a confession of its "sins." It is saying that it has achieved a few things of permanent worth while in addition it has many unsolved problems and unfulfilled aspirations.[39] The next generation is to reconstruct society according to both the achieved and the aspired values. "Thus," concludes Coe, "education is not only society's supreme act of self-preservation; it is also society's most sincere judgment upon its own defects, and its supreme effort at self-improvement."[40] While it preserves values, education is also an immanent critic of all socially organized desire. It aims to enable the learners to revalue all values and thereby come to new forms of socially organized desire. The reconstruction of society is not arbitrary but rather is based on the possibility that the new generation comes to a new ordering of values. This aim that pupils learn to revalue present values of society and thereby begin to reconstruct society shows that education is fulfilling its role in the purposed evolution of the human species. There will be a progressive movement toward the ideal human and the ideal human society.

We conclude that society ought to make its conscious aim to "mold" the plastic mind of the young so that they will conduct themselves in the interest of social well being. Society ought to mold the minds of the young both with achieved and with aspired values, so that they will be equipped to keep on reconstructing and improving society. Coe wants society to deliberately control the "mind-set" of the young and thereby control what kind of people they will become. "Control" for Coe is an aim of education which does not contradict the aim of individual or personal "development." From his evolutionary and idealistic perspective, Coe feels that he knows in what direction the development of the human species and human society is moving, so he can hasten the process along by giving a set to the minds of the young.

The aim of Christian education. According to Coe, the Church is the one agency of society which has a profound commitment to the social aims of deliberately educating the young. The Church represents something like the ideal self of society which makes those aims its own which all of the agencies of society's education ought to have. To understand the purpose of Christian education, we must therefore look at what distinguishes the education of this "worshipping society" from the social training one can receive in state schools or in organizations of good will.

The first distinguishing mark of the church as educator lies in "the comprehensiveness and the radicalness of the principle of human fellowship that it professes."[41] Other institutions of society are indeed beginning to discover and actualize the social ideal of a society in which persons have ultimate value. However, they limit themselves in applying the personality-principle only to certain issues and certain groups. They are satisfied with a partial social justice and welfare, rather than drawing the consequences that all men are brothers--in all economic groups and all nations. The churches, despite their shortcomings, are alone among all our social institutions in that they "undertake to accept the radical consequences of Jesus' social idealism."[42] On the basis of its own avowed principles, the church cannot rest until it has reconstructed itself and all of world civilization according to the social ideal. The church cannot rest easy when society is organized by a mixture of selfish and social desires. It must undertake to reconstruct or purify the desires of man "until selfishness is really eradicated."[43] For example, private profit must be replaced with concern for others as the key value. There is a social radicalism implied in the principle of human fellowship which the church is called upon to carry into life by its profession of faith in God, the Great Valuer of Persons.[44] Expressed in religious terminology, the church is committed to complete love of other humans. "This spirit of loving to the uttermost, which is likewise the spirit of self-criticism to the uttermost, is the first thing that specifically Christian education adds to the other agencies of social progress."[45]

The second peculiar significance of the church as educator is found "in its maintenance of worship of the Father," who is the source and inspirer of this limitless valuing (or "loving") of persons.[46] Being devoted to social welfare on the basis of the worth of persons is not an arbitrary choice, but an expression of the divine principle which guides our discriminate choosing and our evolution. The church's worship of the Father allows its members to sense that their communion with men is an act of participating in a divine destiny, or in the unfolding of the ultimately real. In worship, the individual's mind or soul discovers the universal Over-will or Over-soul.[47] From Coe's Psychology of Religion, we know that he considers the act of faith in a personal God as being an assertion we make that our regard for persons and the personal is objectively valid, i.e., provided for in reality itself.[48] Worship also orders the desires and actions of its members in reference to this divine principle. In a rare burst of poetic language, Coe describes the act of us worshipping together as follows:

> . . . here, pausing from the multiplicity of affairs to seek a central, organizing principle for them all, and lifting our eyes from the particular stitches that we have been taking in the flowing garment of divinity in order that we may contemplate the garment itself, we find meaning, rationality, in our existence; . . . rationality as direction for our forces. . . .[49]

Worship directs our energies and actions by intensifying and focusing our preferences or values in terms of a divine central value--which we know to be the regard for persons.

Thus the Church is distinctive as an educational agency by its profounder grasp and knowledge of what social ideal should control the actual than one finds in other social institutions. And it is distinctive by a religious devotion to its central ideal. This devotion asserts that the ideal is reality and should therefore be the organizing principle of all our preferences. In worship, the members begin to sense their part in working out the divine destiny of the world.

On the basis of the social ideal which the church professes and worships, the social aim of Christian education can be expressed as follows: "Growth of the young toward and into mature and efficient devotion to the democracy of God, and happy self-realization therein."[50] The distinctiveness of this aim lies in its claim that all instruction or aids to personal and religious development must focus on enabling learners to participate "in the creation of an ideal society," which is for Coe a genuine democracy.[51] It is by a growing participation in the creation of a society in which humans are of infinite worth that "the pupil will realize his fellowship with the Father."[52] Devotion to the cause of democracy is identical with conformity to God's social will.

Implicit in the stated aim for Christian education are the two aims of society's deliberate education: "social adjustment and efficiency" and "social reconstruction." What the aim of Christian education adds to these general aims is the specification of the ultimate end of society: "the democracy of God." Jesus' espousal of the brotherhood of men, or of the personality-principle, "leads on with the inevitableness of fate to the ideal of a democratic organization of human society."[53] Thus Christian education is education for democracy, just as conversely any education that leads to an active devotion to the democratic ideal is at least implicitly religious, since it participates in the divine principle of the world's unfolding.

"Happy self-realization" in a democratically organized society is a necessary individual aim that is given with the social aim of Christian education. As we shall see more clearly when discussing the educational process by which the social aim is reached, "to socialize the group we must individualize the pupils, that is, lead each one to adopt justice as his very own desire, purpose, and practice."[54] A person can only become devoted to the democratic ideal as he achieves personal satisfaction in self-actively reconstructing society. Coe describes a self-realized individual as follows:

> To be a person is to have satisfactions and dissatisfactions that are "one's own" and that are discriminated, compared, and weighed by the one whose "own" they are, and to act in view of this discrimination, comparison, and weighing.[55]

By interacting in a society of persons, an individual becomes aware of his own desires and satisfactions. As he becomes more discriminate, he will begin to choose the better, i.e., more social values, over egocentric values. By ongoing discrimination and action, he will learn to accept the democratic ideal as his own purpose. Thereby he becomes a self-realized individual in the very process by which he discovers the worth and welfare of others as an ultimate value.

In A Social Theory of Religious Education, Coe's primary focus is on the social aim of Christian education which is implicit in Jesus' espousal of the personality-principle. In What is Christian Education?, written some twelve years later, the primary focus is on the individual aim implicit in the same personality-principle. It is the aim of education to make the young into persons, that is, into people who desire, discriminate, judge and act on their own. Thus the task of Christian education can be expressed as follows: "To awaken personality and to help it to rich self-activity in a society of persons."[56] In this statement of purpose, Coe is expressing his concern that the young do not merely act by accommodation to a givengroup of society. "Social adjustment" should never block the learners' abilities to discern new values on their own and thus come to a self-active reconstruction of their social world. The teacher must aim to set the learners free from repeating the past or from hiding behind prescribed and respectable patterns of action. They must become self-realized persons who think, judge, and act on their own in response to their involvement in a society of persons.

Has Coe shifted in his basic position in the interval between the writing of these two books? Is Coe less concerned with "controlling" the minds or wills of the young by means of specific social ideals? There is some tension between the former emphasis on "social adjustment" and the latter one on "self-activity" or the former norm of successful education in "social efficiency" and the latter one in "an awakened personality." However Coe's belief that a self-realized personality who acts on his own will inevitably accept Coe's own social ideal as their organizing principle and center of devotion resolves the tension in his own mind. If the ideal is accounted for in the heart of reality, then the self-active personality will inevitably discover it on his own and make it his own.

What Christian education aims at--in the interplay of the social and individual dimension of a learner's life--is "growth." Christian education does not aim to impose a set of religious or moral ideas whereby knowing would be divorced from the developmental processes of actual living. Christian living does not begin late in life after one has accumulated certain facts and then "caught" religion in a certain experience. Rather Christian or religious living grows and develops as the child grows and develops. The development of the child is "religious" growth insofar as his mental functions (which include the will) develop. The mind gradually learns its own preferences and desires. It comes to discriminate amongst desires. It begins to order its values or desires in terms of the more or less important. The mind begins to desire to preserve and perpetuate certain values. Finally the mind intensifies and unifies its desires by choosing a central value "as its very life." This growth-process of the mental functions, which Coe describes in detail in *The Psychology of Religion*,[57] is "religious," since it is guided by God who is the desire within our desires or the choice within our choices. It is by means of learning to choose one's preferences discriminately and to order them in terms of a central organizing principle that one is guided by the divine principle in the world. One is guided toward "God" or reality. Because of the religious dimension to mental, volitional development, the aim of Christian education must be expressed in terms of "growth," such as "growth . . . toward . . . devotion to the democracy of God" or "growth in social motive"[58] or "growth in the knowledge of the Christian ideal"[59] or even "growth in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ."[60] All these phrases are synonyms. The "growth" which Christian education aims at is the normal development of choosing one's own preferences, which become the motives for action. These discriminate preferences will gradually move from egoistic ones to social ones, ultimately coming to embrace Christ's social ideal. To know Christ is to be devoted to the same cause he was. Christian teaching and Christian living merge into one process: the process of purposed development.

In looking back at this description of the aim of Christian education, we can recognize Coe's concern to base both the aims and processes of education in the needs and processes of human living. The aim is not expressed in terms of a body of religious or moral ideas to be taught. The aim is to help people grow into authentic ("self-realized") persons. They can only be authentic persons as they learn self-activity in response to the social world of persons that surrounds them. Personal development always has an ethical or moral dimension. The individual is related to others and therefore can only develop as a self in that process by which he learns to value others as having infinite worth--or at least by which he learns to accept the "personality principle" as his value.

What is "religious" or "Christian" in this aim? Coe would answer that learning to love others is itself a religious act. It is communion with the Father, or with the "personal" which is at the heart of the universe. Implicitly the whole process of coming to a devotion to the personality-principle is a process of religious growth, guided by the choice within our choices. Explicitly, the development of socially concerned and active individuals is a religious process which should culminate in the belief that Christ's social ideal is reality. It should culminate in faith in God as the Great Valuer of persons, since this faith intensifies, and adds significance to, one's devotion to the social ideal. The learner comes to want what God wants.

It is the religious dimension of Coe's aim that poses problems for indirect communication, not the moral dimension. Coe identifies social living as the arena of human becoming and of encountering God. He does not want to transcend the realm of "the natural," as he calls it, or the realm of "creation," as Luther would call it. He wants God to be immanent in nature (which includes human nature). Immanence implies, for Coe, that learners have a direct access to the divine or ultimately real. Ironically, God is accessible to learners in knowledge of a social ideal (the democracy of God) which transcends the actual situations of social living in which the learners find themselves. The learners become observers and judges of actual life on the basis of their knowledge of the divine ideal for society, rather than participants in a continually ambiguous society. God is also present in the learners' choosing as the "choice within their choices." Thus Coe seeks to overcome the sin of egoism, which he regards as prevalent in society, not by reversals, but by a deliberate development of the choosing function of the mind. The immanence of God implies "growth" as an educational aim.

As we now turn to consider the educational processes by which Coe hopes to reach his social aim, we will keep on encountering how Coe's idealistic assumption of the human mind's direct access to the divine prevents him from reaching his aim, despite the many lasting insights into a form of Christian education that seeks to base itself in the processes of created living.

3. The Social Processes of Christian Education

Coe coined a catch-phrase to characterize that prevalent type of Christian education which saw its purpose in transmitting a religious heritage or a body of religious knowledge to the minds of learners. He called it "transmissive education."[61] Coe realized, as we heard, that the transmission of ideas can be accomplished without engaging the learner's way of living amongst his fellows. In the language of this thesis, Coe criticized "transmissive education" for being "direct communication" which does not make the learner independently active in finding moral responses to his social living. Of course, the theory of "transmissive education" was also concerned with the Christian practice of learners. But it falsely assumed that one can get people to perform their "Christian duty" and to develop a "Christian character" by teaching duties and virtues as a part of the transmitted content. An important part of teaching any lesson became the phase of "applying" the lesson "to life." "Applying the lesson," as it was called, "consisted in telling pupils or getting them to tell what our duties are. Not doing a duty, but naming it; not getting into action, but transferring still another idea."[62] Some teachers did notice the hiatus "between accepted content and accepted conduct"; however, they did not let this gap reflect on their own teaching technic, but on human nature in general--i.e., as being naturally depraved.[63] Or they could explain the gap, as we heard, with the slogan that religion after all is caught, not taught. By focusing on an idealized culture or body of knowledge to be transmitted, this form of teaching "did not consist in dealing dynamically with the present situation [in which the learners find themselves]."[64]

What is Coe's counter-proposal to "transmission" as the central educative process? Consistent with his social-personal aims, the basal educative process is for Coe a series of "experiments in social living." The term "experiment" is already indicative of how Coe will use various dynamics of social living--namely, to discover truths or real values based on actual experiences. A central element in the "experiments" therefore becomes the phase of "reflection on experience" or "instruction." Since the learners must discover the values for themselves and integrate them themselves, the best method of "instruction" is by means of the "project method." I will first describe the whole sweep of the "experiment in social living" as Coe presents it in A Social Theory and then further develop the notion of "Christian instruction" and the use of the "project method" using What is Christian Education? and Law and Freedom in the School. Since Christian education differs from school education in terms of degrees and not of kind, we will use both Coe's secular and religious writings.

After we have unfolded the notion of "experiments in social living" as the basal educative process by which learners grow in devotion to the democracy of God or grow in social motive, we must look at what obstacles threaten these "experiments" from coming to fruition. What blocks the growth of social motive? And how does Coe propose to overcome any obstacles that he sees? Thus the second part of describing the educative process will deal with "overcoming the obstacles to motive-growth."

a. Experiments in social living

If Christian education aims at enabling learners to deal dynamically with their own present situations on the basis of social motives, the primary "content" of the teaching-learning process must be found "in present relations and interactions between persons."[65] For Coe, "a curriculum is not primarily a systematic set of ideas, but a progressive order of motives actually at work, actually fruiting here and now."[66] Growing social motives in actual situations of social living, rather than the imposition of a graded set of ideas, is the Christian "course of study." In a more detailed description, Coe speaks of the curriculum as follows:

> Under the concept of curriculum we are to think of the pupil as moving . . . through social experiences; of these experiences as arising in active dealings with real situations of the present; as including the rise of intelligent social purposes; as coming in a prearranged order that is governed by the growth of the pupil's social capacities, and as including human and divine fellowship in a single whole. Fundamentally, then, the curriculum is a course of living, not a course in supposed preliminaries to real life.[67]

Because this curriculum orders the social experiences according to the growth of the pupils and because a central dimension in the rise of intelligent social purpose is observation, analysis, and judgment, Coe calls the curriculum "a graded series of experiments in social living."[68] In *A Social Theory* Coe describes five "part processes" which constitute the educative process of these progressive experiments. In religious language, it is the process by which "love" or the value of persons is wrought into steady and deliberate living.

The basic elements of the process. The "first and fundamental element in the Christian educative process is the introduction of the pupil to the specific happiness of being a member of society."[69] The first thing is personal fellowship, and not an idea. In personal fellowship--whether in a good family, the church, or the class as a little society--one experiences and practices the basic principle of true human society, namely "love" or respect for others. The joy one experiences in sharing with others or being attached to an other, such as the teacher, is the foundation for social consciousness. It awakens the desire to be a member of society. This nascent desire and consciousness is also the beginning of the discovery of the divine purpose for human life. Neither telling nor commanding is the primary way in which someone will begin to discover on his own "the validity of the ancient law of love which is also the law of justice," but attraction a learner finds toward persons who love him.[70] The attraction a child finds in persons "who already live socially in his own environment" is the beginning or birth of social motive. "This initial, pleasurable experience is what produces the momentum for carrying the principle of fellowship into other groups."[71]

The second part process Coe states as "causing the pupil's social attachments to expand from narrower to wider groups."[72] Personal relationships between pupil and teacher, pupil and other pupils, or members of a family can never be an end in itself. The ultimate end to which all social relationships point is the "democracy of God" as a universal brotherhood. The pupil's social motive must grow until it leads him to devote himself actively and efficiently to the creation of an ideal society--which includes the task of working toward a world civilization. It is by means of expanding groups to which the pupil becomes attached that an experiential basis for this motive growth is created. As Coe puts it:

> Family loyalties must be merged into humane interests of the widest scope. The social consciousness of a Sunday-school class must enlarge into a school consciousness, and this into a church consciousness; and the whole must flow outward toward the whole needy world.[73]

It is not only an idealistic dream of Coe's that social consciousness should expand to include the whole world. He bases the ideal on the observation of the "natural social order" in which a child's social attachments expand from narrower to wider groups and in expanding become more complicated.[74] The narrow circle of family life is soon expanded to "play life," in which the child is confronted with other children, with a variety of play-rules and codes of conduct. From there he moves on to "school life," "civic life," "occupational life" and "marriage."[75] In the end, the growing person is living in a complex web of interpenetrating circles of social attachments. While this progressive enlargement and complication of social relationships is the "natural order," it does not mean the pupils will automatically devote themselves to the welfare of others in the wider social groupings such as in civic and occupational life. Therefore Christian education deliberately attempts to cause the pupils to move beyond narrow and ultimately self-seeking loyalties.

The third part-process deals with how this "outgoing purpose," this expansion of social consciousness can be accomplished. The necessary process is "an expanding series of social activities."[76] "Enlargement of social consciousness does not have to precede, but to be developed in and through, enlarging co-operation in serious social undertakings."[77] To appreciate the worth and needs of others which are beyond one's narrow social group, e.g., of the family, and to expand one's social loyalties to include these others, one requires more than positive feelings toward them. It is by means of social activities, either with them or for them, that one begins to understand their particular situation and begins to feel a responsibility toward them. Coe stresses that these activities must be "serious social undertakings" to fend off the notion that a "mere pitter-patter of imposed activities" would have any serious impact on developing social motive.[78] The pupils must be led to co-operation in genuine social causes. This cannot be accomplished by sporadic good works, but only by participating in an orderly succession of enterprises which take the age and changing social situation of the pupils into account. Ultimately the whole educative process aims at increasing the social efficiency of the learners, so that they will be socially active in creating a better society--within all the interpenetrating circles of social relationships. Coe hopes that an ordered succession of social activities will lead to social involvement as a habit of the pupils. Social activities thus aim to modify the learners' behaviors; and by modifying them to habitually include action for others, the social activities affect the consciousness of the learners. Action leads to social consciousness.

The fourth element of the educative process is "Christian instruction." This "intellectual activity" is not an attempt to transfer certain truths to the mind of the child, hoping that they will enter into his experience in a vital way sometime in the indefinite future. Rather instruction is the aid the teachers give the child in defining, understanding, and improving "something that he is already doing and enjoying."[79] Christian instruction thus deals with the phase of reflection upon one's social interactions and upon one's operative desires expressed in one's actual conduct. Social interaction in expanding groups and increasingly complex social activities remains the material or content of "instruction." However, instruction improves the use one makes of these experiences. By being based in actual interactions, Christian instruction has overcome the split between Christian doctrine and Christian experience. Once one rigorously relates Christian instruction and the transmission of information to actual social interactions, the function of instruction becomes this:

> To assist the child to analyze the situations, purposes, and activities with which he has to do, so that impulsive goodness shall grow into a deliberate good will; so that the sphere of the good will shall be better and better understood; so that co-operation in social causes shall be organized on a wider and wider scale and with ever-increasing efficiency, and so that all the resources of a cultivated spirit may be known and made available for all.[80]

The central aim of the "instruction-process" is that the learners do not act merely out of impulse or on the basis of imitating someone else, but out of deliberate choices of the better over against the worse. Only a deliberate good will is aggressive enough to tackle difficult situations or situations without precedence. Only someone who consciously devotes himself to an ideal or self-evidencing good will be committed to social involvement far beyond what any legislation or prescribed and conventional morality can demand.[81] The value of persons must become the learner's own central value. The attraction the learner feels for good fellowship must develop to a personal commitment to the principle of fellowship (or "love") which underlies one's experience. To bring this about, the pupil's attention must be turned to notice the differnce that exists here and now between social relations that are governed by active love and those that are not thus governed.[82] The pupil must reflect on his experiences and uncover for himself the validity of the principle of fellowship or active love. He will begin to value this principle and use it in defining his own social prupose of existence.

We will discuss this phase of "Christian instruction" or reflection on social interaction in greater detail, once all five elements of the total process are before us. It is this phase which is central in enabling pupils to come to a social self-realization, that is, to become truly integrated persons in a society of persons. At present, we will limit ourselves to pointing out--as Coe does--that this instruction phase is the place of rigorous intellectual activity. Here is also the place where all the resources of history, literature, or doctrine become relevant. They are relevant in expanding the cases in which the pupils can study men in their social relations.[83] In such a study they serve to illuminate the path of active love and to strengthen thoroughly social satisfactions.[84] The Bible, for example, is a body of powerful social literature which can greatly help in the reflection on present social interactions, since in its stories the personality-principle is central and people act from social motives.[85] All resources and knowledge are relevant which help the learner to analyze and understand the complexities of social living and the results that come about by different lines of conduct.

The fifth and final element is the evoking of faith "in a fatherly God and in a human destiny that outreaches all the accidents of our frailty."[86] Coe states that his practical concern is "not merely to produce sincere belief in God and immortality, but to make our pupils yearn for God and for the complete triumph of his social desire."[87] The educational process has reached its aim once the pupils have identified their desires with God's social desire. That is, they are conformed to the social will of God and enjoy it, because his will is what gives them satisfaction and joy. This is the last stage of the growth of social motive.[88] Belief in God is not an end in itself. As history has shown, this belief can actually be used to sanctify and strengthen unjust social ordinances and authorities.[89] For Coe, belief in God is an intensification and conservation of the value of persons. From our discussion of Coe's view of men's mental-religious development we know that belief in God as the Great Valuer of Persons is the way one discovers the ultimate reality of one's values. Belief in God thus asserts that persons are reals and that it is our human destiny to participate in the creation of a society based on the personality-principle. Belief in God is in fact an act of valuing one's best values, of believing in one's best ideals. On the basis of this understanding of faith in God, we can now see that evoking faith in God is the way teachers can move learners from the phase of discovering the basic principles of social existence to committing themselves to them as their ultimate value. There can be no separation between faith in God and love of the neighbor in such a view of faith as commitment to the personality-principle.

The whole educative process is the means of evoking faith in a God who loves people. Faith begins with experiencing love and is deepened as social attachments expand and one practices loving. The voice of human need is heard, by the help of education, as the voice of God. Finally faith develops by the learner's discovery of a social purpose so deep and fundamental that it takes on the dimension of worship. Actual Christian instruction and Christian worship in the context of Christian fellowship nourishes this development of faith. The growth of social motivation does not begin with the thought of God and then tries to bring human life within its halo.[90] Rather motive growth and the understanding of God begins with human experiences of the divine reality of love and then develops toward the apprehension of God. Only after this development will the thought of God lead us to more intensive involvement with, and to a better understanding of, humans.[91] In traditional language, Coe states: "The correct policy for Christian education is now indicated; the learner is to be led, through his acquaintance with the 'witnessing church' to realize the presence and the character of God."[92] In a detailed summary of the method by which God is apprehended, Coe states the following:

> If there be a Great Valuer of Persons, he will be most manifest where we take risks on behalf of persons. He will be manifest in the grit with which lovers of men hold on through difficulties and defeats, in the richness of the fellowship that the adventurers have with one another, in the gains that are added to other personalities, and in our defeats when we compromise with the principle of personality.
>
> Experimentation directed toward increased self-realization or enfranchisement of persons, then, is the method of apprehending the divine presence.[93]

We conclude that the five elements in the graded series of experiments in social living all work together in enabling learners to discover, and commit themselves to, the divine principle in reality. It is by means of this discovery and commitment that the learners come to increased self-realization.

Christian instruction. The critical element in socializing the learner's will by means of a graded series of experiments in social living is the dimension of "Christian instruction," which for Coe is the element of reflection upon social interactions. The element of "reflection" refers to the observation and analysis of the root causes of actual conduct which is either socially constructive or destructive. Analysis of one's social experiences is central to a life viewed as an ongoing series of experiments in social living. By means of analysis, one can discover the self-evidencing good and can begin creative social enterprises to actualize this known good. For Coe, the learner's analysis of his experiences and conduct marks the watershed between "good natured drift" and "deliberate good will." It marks the difference also between other-directed or conventional actions and purposeful self-guidance. It is by means of analysis, which leads to evaluation and judgment of actions and purposes, that the learner discovers and revalues values.

What is the teaching-learning process of reflecting on social interactions? What is the role of the teacher and of the learner? How are values discovered? How do they become integrated in a person? How are discovered values applied in actual social interactions? Coe seems to believe that all these questions are implicitly answered by the fact that he calls the whole educative process an "experiment" or "series of experiments" in social living, since he nowhere gives a detailed exposition on how the reflection on doing and experiencing is to take place.[94] We must attempt to sketch the teaching-learning process from references scattered throughout Coe's writings.

The basic role of the teacher is to stimulate the learner to discover on his own what he really prefers.[85] The personality-principle demands that the learner must discover his own real values by self-activity, if he is to become a whole person. The sign of wholeness is that an individual has discriminate satisfactions which are his own, as we heard above. It is the individual who must inspect his experiences, rather than letting them merely flow through him. He must himself put his very own stamp of meaning on the experience, which he does by becoming actively "for" or "against" some things, i.e., by evaluating and judging.[96] Self-activity in finding the meaningful and valuable is a law of human development for Coe. It corresponds also to the "law" that all values are mutable, since they are part of an evolutionary process toward the real. As far as the function of the teacher is concerned the law of self-activity by the learner means:

> Not at all to determine in advance, apart from his [viz., the learner's] own self-activity, what he shall think or what he shall value, but to stimulate him to take notice of facts, distinctions, and issues that he might overlook, and to make clear--not to make persuasive--the reasoning and valuations of his neighbors and of his predecessors.[97]

The teacher's double task is thus to stimulate the learner to a self-active exploration of his real preferences and to ensure that the learner's preferences are not arbitrary or merely subjective, but are a genuine reaction of the learner's mind to social reality. The learner must be led to choose what ends he wants to pursue in life taken as a series of social projects or enterprises. And he must be led to choose discriminately, if he is to be guided toward reality by the "choice within our choices," i.e., the immanent God.

To stimulate the learner to discover his real preferences, the teacher's best method is to cause him to define to himself what ends or purposes he really wants to pursue in the many social situations in which he finds himself.[98] This is the best method to discover one's values, since the values are not viewed as isolated entities or facts but are intimately connected with the ends of one's action and conduct. The teacher causes the pupil to compare and contrast one purpose with another. This exercise "inevitably" leads to value-judgments of "better" or "worse." The learner approves one purpose while he condemns another.[99] He is weighing and judging which ends are worth pursuing.

What guarantees that the learner will not happily choose egoistic, rather than social ends, as those which promise the greatest satisfactions? Coe firmly believes--on the basis of his idealistic view of the human mind --that discriminate judgments will invariably choose social over egoistic ends, that is, the real over the illusory ends. Discriminate judgments must be based on a rigorous analysis of one's own conduct and that of others to determine which type of purposes and pursuits lead to socially constructive results. The teacher's method is to give the learner a "never-ending presentation and re-presentation of the actual conditions of the men, women, and children whom our conduct affects or might affect, together with inescapably clear analysis of the facts and forces that make for and against their full self-realization."[100] The teacher thus has the task of ensuring that the learner's choosing occurs within the context of society in which we affect each other by our actions. Similarly the teacher must ensure that the learner does not overlook the desires of others as vital data in determining his own preferences.[101] If the learner's development is not blocked, this social data--of the affects of our actions on others and of the desires of others--will lead the learner to make "intelligent approvals and condemnations."[102] He will inevitably choose the socially constructive ends, since the value of persons is the objective reality a clear mind will see.

The aim of the teacher is that "discriminate choosing" or idealizing will become an ongoing process for the learner. The learner's social contacts gradually expand, so that he has to discover new purposes for new situations. The learner must also be led to be continually dissatisfied with achieved values, so that he will aspire to actualize what is present only in the form of vision or ideal. The dissatisfaction is brought about the same way that the original judging and weighing is: by being confronted with the actual conditions of people in our social world. This data "will reveal our unfinished tasks."[103] The learner begins to look forward to what is still to be achieved by ongoing reconstructions of society, rather than looking back at what he has already accomplished and being satisfied with that.[104] The development of the individual, the evolution of the human race, and the gradual creation of an ideal society all demand that the learner continually discover new values and new purposes to be accomplished.

The self-activity of discovering new values must eventuate in a self-active pursuit of social projects or enterprises, if the discovered values are to become an integral part of the learner's personality. Again the teacher has no direct way to make certain values enter the learner's experience in a vital way. He can only provide occasions for this integration to occur. As Coe expresses it,

> I, the teacher, cannot integrate the impulses, the values, the choices of a pupil; he must do it himself, or it never will be done. As he can be a person only by self-activity, so he can become a unified person only by self-activity in the organization of self-activities.[105]

The learner becomes a unified person as he lets his actions be guided by his discriminate choices. Certain values become the focus and unifying center of his desires and activities. One becomes a unified person by "purposeful self-guidance." "Purposeful" activity is a way of tackling social "problems" that includes ongoing evaluation, integration of values and action. In Coe's words, purposeful self-guidance connotes "desire; conflict between desires; selection through discriminate judgment; forethought and planning; fitting means to ends; carrying a planned activity through; judging the product and one's self by means of it, and thus making ready for further self-guided action."[106]

The project method. The educational method that leads to self-activity is the "project method." Coe remarks, "It is not a tool that our taste or convenience picks out from several alternatives, but primarily a law of mind and character. . . .[107] The pupil must be led to discover his own purposes, carry out his projects, and evaluate the project and himself as the basis for uncovering new ideals and purposes. In this process of project-learning, the learner is necessarily integrating and organizing his values so that they serve as a guide to action. Project-learning is a "law of mind and character" because it involves the learner in creative self-activity in his responses to social situations. The individual works on his own and has his own satisfactions--that is, he is becoming a person. "Wherever real project-teaching occurs, it breaks through imitation, prevents parasitism, consciously avoids regimentation . . .," says Coe.[108]

What kind of interventions does the teacher make in the learner's project-learning? The teacher is responsible for "pervasive guidance" when the project method is used.[109] It is noteworthy that this "guidance" is no longer limited to presenting and re-presenting social reality on the basis of which the learner discovers his own values. Rather the teacher guides the learner's projects in such a way that he discovers values that the teacher wants him to find. According to Coe, before a teacher can use the project method effectively he must ask himself, "What are the superior values that we hope the young will discover by our help?"[110] The corollary questions are: "What would we like to have the young become? What sort of future society do we assume to be desirable?"[111] The creation of this "ideal person" and of this "ideal society" is society's (or the teacher's) project which underlies and guides all the individual projects and self-activities of the learners. Society's (or the teacher's) values are embodied in the curriculum; and the learner is led to "discover" these by his projects and self-activities. Discovering one's own real preferences is being replaced with discovering the teacher's preferences in the purposeful activity which is to enable the learner to integrate his values and impulses. Coe does not sense a contradiction between self-discovery of values and self-active discovery of society's superior values, because of his belief that, although all values are mutable (up to a point), certain values are rooted in being itself and are therefore our "destiny."[112] Society's or the Church's control of the learner's projects thus merely speeds up the evolution of values and the development of the individual toward social self-realization. The teacher or "the mature" person is able to know in advance of time and situation the ultimately real values which he allows the learner to find self-actively. Therefore, for example, Coe is certain that his own social model of a democracy which must become a classless society corresponds to reality itself and is not merely one possible way of idealizing.

Coe does not want society's control of what the learners value lead the learners to an uncreative conformity. Coe does not desire a social adjustment which is not coupled with active social reconstruction. The central creative principle which carries forward evolution is the discriminate choosing of individuals within the context of society. This is the key to ongoing revaluations of values, to new insights into reality, and to social reconstruction. Thus Coe asks himself: "Is the project merely a subtler mode of conforming the pupil to a predetermined social model, or is the new method, as to the pupil it appears to be, a sincere, uncamouflaged presentation of social reality?"[113] Coe acknowledges that the project method implies an element of conformity to someone else's social will, since in all learning it is the more mature person who guides the development of the young. He concludes that this conformity is not bad since it is balanced by the fact that this predetermined social will of the underlying project is being challenged and corrected by the experiences and judgments the pupil makes in his own projects. The proper balance between social control and a learner's creative insights and actions is given when society (or the teacher) and the learner "both submit their case to the test of a changing and enlarging experience that is mutually initiated and mutually judged."[114] Even if the balance between conformity to a predetermined social model and the learner's self-discovery of ideals and self-activity in shaping a new society is weighted in favor of conformity or adjustment, it would not worry Coe very much. He envisions the ideal self of society (i.e., its religious self) being the one who determines the "superior values" which correspond to being itself. The learner can do no better than discover these values which are expressed in the curriculum on his own. Coe is willing to override the necessary corrective to "teacher control" given by "mutuality," when his specific social ideal is at stake.

We conclude that the learner's will is socialized by a progressive series of social experiments which are graded according to the learner's expanding social contacts. The experiments take as their basis actual social experiences of the child, either of home, play, occupation, or of the little societies of the classroom or church. The learner must reflect on these experiences to discover his own real preferences. The teacher presents social reality to the learner which includes the desires of others and the effects of our actions on others. The learner is encouraged to use this data in forming discriminate judgments of what ends or purposes are worth pursuing in the actual social situations he finds himself in. The integration of discovered values occurs by self-active pursuits of social projects. The evaluation of these projects and oneself is the basis for new reflection, that is, new discriminate choices and thereby new actions. While the notion of social living as reflective experiments stresses the importance of the learner's self-discovery of values and self-activity in reconstructing social situations, the notion of these experiments being guided by society's superior values points to the dimension of the learner's social adjustment and conformity. Coe hopes that a useful balance between self-discovery and social adjustment is given in the democratic process of mutual purposing and judging in which society or the mature submit their wants to the learner's scrutiny and vice versa.

If this educative process operated under ideal conditions, the learners would develop naturally to be both adjusted to society and efficient in reconstructing it. That is they would continually revalue achieved values and creatively act on their own in changing society according to the normative personality-principle. However, Coe recognizes that education does not occur under ideal conditions. In actual fact the development of learners is often blocked. They end up being efficient only in pursuing the conventional ends of society which express a mixture of egoistic and social wants. It is to a brief consideration of these obstacles to normal development and of how Coe proposes to overcome them that we must turn to conclude our description of the educative process.

b. Overcoming the obstacles of motive-growth

In The Motives of Men, the older Coe gives a good analysis of what blocks people from a full mental-religious development. In this book he asks, Why do people in practice (by and large) not live out of the dominant Christian motive of being a personal self among personal selves? Why are even "Christians" who are aware of the Christian ideal often satisfied with a conventional goodness and respectability, rather than being self-active in reconstructing society according to the ideal? Coe discerns "that the actual exercise of men's wills thwarts and imprisons the superior motives."[115] An imprisoning of ourselves by ourselves occurs. For example self-love blocks our free self-activity on behalf of others by which alone we become fully socialized and human. Coe recognizes that even a conscious approval of religious and secular ideals does not necessarily mean that one is actually guided by the dominant motive of the worth of persons. "Assent to ideals, and emotional identification of oneself with America, the church of all ages, or the will of God can be a species of self-love and self-sophistication."[116] Thus the main obstacle to full human development is not that we do not have and know high motives, but that these superior motives are in bondage.[117]

What explains the bondage of the right values and motives that we know? Coe firmly insists that we cannot blame (biological) human nature with its impulses and desires for the bondage of values, as many theories of the depravity of human nature contend. Our impulses and instincts are not morally bad in themselves. Impulses are not our jailors, because they "have within themselves no coherence, whereas types of coherence within a self make all the difference between freedom and bondage."[118] The source of a blocked development--which is Coe's notion of "sin"--is man's way of organizing and giving coherence to his impulses and desires. The human ability to organize and control the actual by means of thought, his ability to prioritize and conserve desires, is what makes man a personal being. It is this same ability which is the source both of man's freedom and bondage depending on the type of coherence the mind seeks. "If anyone insists that human nature is depraved," says Coe, "he should place the seat of depravity in the rational man, or the supposed higher nature that is expressed in religion, morals, customs, government, social organization, and deliberate purposes generally."[119] The real "depravity" of man is thus not given by the existence of wild and uncivilized drives. Rather it is given by man's rational ordering of his social world in such a way that it is closed to creative evolution and to the needs of personal self-realization.

How does the rational ordering of life, which is necessary for any personal-social existence that transcends a mere instinctual or impulsive life, block us from further development and from openness to the needs of the others of society? Coe replies as follows:

> In order to live rationally, we must organize and institutionalize our behavior, which implies giving a sort of mechanical or automatic power to yesterday's thoughts. But as soon as any institution begins to be efficient, it resists rational inquiry with respect to itself.[120]

Reason thus ties us to the irrational, i.e., to the unexamined and indiscriminately accepted, by the power of "yesterday's thought" over the present. Patterns of thought and action which once were the expression of a creative and intelligent will become the substitutes for current thinking and revaluing. Past insights and organizations become our conventions. And these conventions begin to prescribe our present thought and actions, blocking us from a creative interaction with the present. The "original sin" of any pattern, system, or form of organization is, therefore, "self-imitation" or "orthodoxy."[121] Petrified ideas are dealt with as if they were living thought and new discovery. But to rely on petrified ideas and to act on the basis of a mere conventional "goodness" is nothing less than being bound to the irrational. In different language, we can say that active devotion to ordering one's social world according to an ideal easily leads to a devotion to the specific product of one's endeavors. One becomes devoted to a specific social model, rather than to a transcendent ideal that forces one to keep on reconstructing society in response to present challenges.

Coe summarizes the paradoxical situation of man as follows: "We must guide thinking by thinking; we must trust reason; but reason itself, in this process, binds us to the irrational."[122] While Coe claims that we "imprison ourselves automatically, but . . . do not automatically release ourselves,"[123] the imprisonment is not our fate as rational creatures. Reason can also continually release us from self-imitation.

But if reason recognizes its bondage, chafes at its bondage, and is the agent by which the bondage can be broken, as Coe admits,[124] then the cause of self-imitation and conventional thinking cannot truly be reason's natural way of functioning, as Coe seems to claim. The "natural" or mature way for reason to function is that it continually re-examines its own ideas and patterns of thought-organization in light of new experiences and data. This "natural" way, thus, would imply a continual release from reason's own past. That is, after all, the experimental method. If this release from one's past does not occur, then there must be some cause outside of reason which causes this defective self-activity of the mind. Coe does observe other factors or causes why humans organize their thought in patterns that block them from re-evaluations. However, he does not explore the full import of these observations. Coe thus observes that a basic cause of self-imitation is that "free men fear their freedom."[125] Coe notes, "Usually the alternatives for our enterprises are, on the one hand, increasing or stabilizing some conventional and comfortable function, or, on the other hand, reaching after an unconventional blessing that costs the pain of self-reconstruction."[126] Freedom implies the pain of self-reconstruction. It is "pain," because one has to deny one's "accumulated self."[127] One cannot find one's identity in past ideas or achievements. One has to venture into the unknown. The chief hindrance to the development of persons--by ongoing revaluations and reconstructions--is thus "emotional,"[128] namely, "fear" of what one cannot control. Coe describes the chief hindrances as follows:

> They are fear of the unknown, and reaching after utter security (which in fact one never experiences until one ceases to grasp after it); pride (which does one the dishonor of identifying oneself with one's possessions or products); sensitiveness to opposition or contradiction . . .; and indolent contentment with the merely good, coupled with only languid approval of the better. In all these states the self withdraws from actuality, covering its eyes as if they could not bear the light.[129]

In this description of the "chief hindrances" to personal growth in motive, Coe has in fact uncovered a deep-seated *desire* for security, for predictability, and for control of one's self-worth which is at least as prevalent in man as the *desire* for ongoing revaluations and genuine self-activity. He has uncovered the phenomenon of a fundamental conflict of desires in humans or the human race: the desire to save oneself by one's absolutized ideas, thought-systems, and repetitive actions versus the desire to search for reality and to work for the welfare of others even at the pain of self-sacrifice and ongoing denial of one's past self.

Coe's own idealistic view of human evolution and the development of individuals--from egoistic desires to social desires--is threatened by this observation that modern people, both young and old, *prefer* the security of conventional, prescribed actions to self-activity. They *prefer* actions that avoid the pain of acknowledging "that one has been in the wrong in a sense so deep that the self expressed therein must be disavowed."[130] Coe, for example, observes that the necessary dimension of social adjustment in education leads almost automatically to an acceptance of the conventional as the right. "The whole process [of social adjustment to society's 'oughts and ought nots'] gives rise to the imperative feeling that the established social way is the 'right' way, and that this or that 'ought' or 'ought not' to be done."[131] And Coe observes that the necessary dimension of project-learning in education leads more often than not toward "action per se rather than toward rational good."[132] Why do people continue in "irrational" that is indiscriminate activity? Coe gives three reasons. First is the power of rationalization. One acts in a certain way before discriminate judgment and reflection; and then one finds reasons for these actions--and their continuance--after the fact. Secondly, people's memories of their past actions are selective in terms of what feeds one's self-esteem. The errors of memory tend toward "the justification and hence continuance of courses of action already entered upon."[133] Thirdly, one tends to forget unpleasant experiences or those experiences where one was restrained (by reality and the reality of others). Thus one's forgetting as well as one's memory "favors action more than it favors discrimination."[134] Coe concludes, "Our nature has a skew; we are bent first toward irrational risks, and then away from clear consciousnesses of the losses that our foolish conduct brings upon us."[135]

How does Coe explain this "skew" in human nature which tends toward the irrational actions of conventionality or activity for its own sake? How does he explain the rationalized blindness to one's irrationality? For Coe the phenomena associated with the human desire for the illusory rather than the real must be explained within his evolutionary schema. Thus he uses the notion of nature needing to produce many varieties so that some can survive. A schema applicable to the biological evolution of species is being used to explain a moral phenomenon. Coe states:

> It is true that the evolution of specialized organs and instincts is accompanied by reduction in the range of the risks taken, and by corresponding reduction in fecundity; but the method of hitting the mark now and then by firing a great many shots in a general direction remains in operation in every species. Even in the human species, which has the advantage of insurance by means of analysis and foresight, the

> older and more expensive sort of insurance [viz., for survival, perpetuation and evolution] is still in operation.
>
> It operates unless it is resisted "head on," that is, by rational self-control.[136]

So the irrational activity of humans is a "throw-back" to the older method of insuring the survival and evolution of one's race. With this explanation of the "skew" in human nature, Coe can avoid the conclusion that people are choosing to avoid the "evolved possibility" of "rational self-control." They are making a moral decision against discriminate judgments and creative self-activity, because these demand ongoing reversals of one's ideas and of one's self-image. Coe is avoiding the conclusion that humans can willfully prefer, choose, or desire the illusory over the real, and selfish ends over social purposes. To admit this possibility, Coe would have to deny his own "accumulated self" with its idealistic perspective on the desire within our desires insuring an evolution toward reality.

By what educative processes can the "chief hindrances" to the growth of motive be overcome? We remember, that the obstacles are a desire for security or conversely a fear of the unknown and uncontrollable. They are "emotional"--or better: volitional-emotional--obstacles. Coe's answer, surprisingly, states that the obstacles are overcome by "rational self-control," as we just heard; or by leading a person to "objectivity, particularly objectivity towards our own sensitive points."[137] Coe chooses to interpret his own observations as pointing to a problem of intelligence: "The diagnosis of humanity's sickness that was made . . . indicated that the affected part is our intelligence, and that recovery depends upon sharpening our wits."[138] Intelligence has imprisoned itself; but in spite of all of Coe's insight into the power of rationalizations and the selectivity of memory, he maintains that intelligence is aware of this bondage and recognizes itself as the agent of emancipation from bondage.[139] Our mind is prone to self-imitation rather than choosing discriminately; therefore, we must sharpen our wits. We are sensitive to criticism and use our reason to justify our egoistic actions; therefore our mind must be sharpened to give us objectivity about ourselves. Only an objective, discriminating mind can release us from precedence, conventionality, and the desire to cling to our past selves. "In particular, the habit of releasing myself from what I am and have depends on continuous alertness joined with self-detachment or objectivity with respect to myself."[140] The paradox in Coe's solution to the problem of a trapped volitional mind is this: We avoid discriminate choices and free self-activity and prefer conventionally prescribed actions, because we fear the unknown and unpredictable into which "objectivity" (i.e., discriminate choosing) will lead us. Yet Coe proposes that we overcome our habit of conventional activity by means of this very objectivity which we flee from.

The methods Coe proposes for the attainment of objectivity and of the habit of ongoing revaluations of myself are the same he proposes for the normal development of mind and motive. For example, Coe gives the following prescription to cure irrational activity: First, postpone action until the situation is analyzed so as to determine a specific objective. Secondly, rearrange the causal factors, both outside ourselves and within ourselves (!). Thirdly, reorganize our habits so as to utilize right causes with the least deflection by irrelevant impulses. Fourthly, protect individuals who are not yet capable of rational self-control. Fifthly, incorporate these individuals into an educative system in which the controls of impulsive action are built in.[141] This prescription for gaining rational self-control in the face of irrational, yet rationalized activity begs the question. It simply reiterates the ideal of rational self-control without stating how one can "rearrange the causal factors within us," i.e., our desires; nor how our habits can be reorganized so that the desire for self-justification of one's past and future acts is replaced by a desire to serve others as the "right cause." Similarly, Coe prescribes "cooperative thinking" as the method which will free us from the web of selfhood. He claims, "When I enter wholeheartedly into dicsussion, . . . I rise out of my inhibitions, my strains, my defence-attitudes. . . ."[142] But Coe does not indicate how a person can be freed to enter "whole-heartedly" into a discussion, when he is afraid of criticism and of having his petrified ideas challenged.

Coe himself is aware that the solution to the blocked moral development he has sketched cannot be found by attempting to simply sharpen our intelligence. However, he was not able to move from the stage of awareness to the stage of formulating a new educative theory. We conclude this sketch of Coe's educational thought by quoting at length the moment of dissatisfaction with his own achievements at which insight breaks forth:

> Intellect, as such, cannot whittle itself to a point, as we see in the practical stupidities of intellectual men; the total attitude of the person towards himself and towards others is involved.
>
> Shall we say, then, that the problem of release from our self-imposed bondage finds its solution in the Greek idea of being ourselves, or in the Christian idea of being saved from ourselves? The answer lies in the fact that when we become objective towards ourselves we come upon the requirement of repentance. We do, indeed, need to be ourselves, but not these selves that we behold in each of us! Here not only does naturalism in any of its current forms prove to be inadequate as a theory of motivation, but also all naive confidence in ourselves whencesoever it be derived. Self-denial is not a vagary of unhealthy minds; it is a law of reason; it is fundamental in the motivation of a man. We save our lives by losing them. The solution of the problem is far more Christian than it is Greek.[143]

4. Coe's Inability to Overcome Direct Communication

Coe attempted to create a theory for Christian education which is "indirect communication" in the sense of enabling learners to respond to their social existence by means of a free and creative self-activity. He rigorously challenged the direct communication of a Christian education which focused almost exclusively on transmitting some revealed truths to the minds of learners. These divine truths compelled an assent of the learners without engaging their self-activity in responding to daily tasks and problems. The result of this intellectualistic-transmissive education was that the learners gave an emotional or cognitive assent to the learned truths and ideals, but in their daily practice were guided by a different set of principles and values. A further result of direct communication was that learners learned to accommodate themselves to prescribed cultures and prescribed forms of action, rather than learning to re-examine and recreate existing forms of social living. The learners did not learn "self-activity" as the key to a personal-social existence.

How are we to evaluate Coe's social theory of Christian education as his counter-proposal to the transmissive education of a dogmatic Christianity wrapped in mysticism, in which Coe himself grew up?[144] Is his model of education "indirect communication"? In practical terms this question asks whether Coe is able to describe an educative process that enables learners to devote their lives to the welfare of others by means of free self-activity. Our evaluation in brief will be that while Coe moves in the right direction for uncovering an educational model that is Christian or "indirect," his idealistic perspective for viewing nature, human development, and God forces him to create a variation of direct communication.

To support this evaluation, I will now summarize the strengths and weaknesses in Coe's aims and processes for Christian education, and then summarize why Coe could not break out of "direct communication."

The personal-social aims of Christian education. The strength of Coe's aim for Christian education lies in the fact that it does not focus on a heritage, a culture, or a set of religious/moral ideas to be transmitted, but rather on human existence and on what Christian education can contribute to bring it to wholeness. Coe recognizes that personal development by itself is too narrow an aim for any deliberate education that hopes the young will become self-realized individuals. There is a "social" --or moral--dimension to human existence. A person is only "mature" or "developed," once he is able to desire the welfare of others in his "little social world" as much as his own. The Church as educator must recognize more radically than other institutions of society that the individual is not an isolated entity, but a part of a brotherhood which encompasses all classes in one country, and all peoples of the world. The personal or individual aim of awakening the personality of the learners can therefore only be accomplished within the social aim of leading learners to respond self-actively to the challenges of living in a society with its economic, political, and familial realms.

By aiming to affect the actual social interactions of learners, Coe is moving away from "direct communication" and its focus on knowledge. By recognizing that the individuals must learn to choose and act on their own, Coe is also moving away from the idea that moral action can be learned directly from knowing moral duties or a list of virtues.

The central weakness in Coe's aim comes from his belief that "God" or the ultimately real can be known directly, once one follows a prescribed process of rational or discriminate choosing of the ends of one's actions. God is a principle immanent in the world. He is therefore the learners' destiny or fate. All we can hope is that the learners will come to participate in this destiny of the world. To help the learners fulfill their fate or their divine destiny, the teachers must seek to control the mind of the learners by means of those ideals which are immutable or divine in themselves. Thus Coe spells out a specific social cause or social ideal which should come to control the learner's outlook on life. The learner is to grow toward an active devotion to the ideal of a democratic society --"the democracy of God"--which to Coe's mind must be a classless society. Worship of God means that one makes the implementation of this ideal of society into "one's very life." In other words, Coe, who aims to help people become _independently active_ in their responses to social existence, also aims to lead them to _accommodate_ themselves to his view of the ideal society, since this is the divine ideal. Thus Coe moves back into the confines of "direct communication" or "transmissive education" by aiming to transmit--no matter by what subtle or "indirect" means--a certain social ideal as the ultimate value and object of worship.

The social process of Christian education. The same ambivalence which marks Coe's aim for Christian education is also noticeable in his educative process

The main _strength_ of the process is that Coe has replaced the _"knowledge-application model"_ which marks transmissive or direct education with an _action--reflection--action model_. The educative process does not focus on imparting religious lessons whose "moral application" the teacher names and the pupil is supposed to do--some time in the future. Rather the beginning and end of the process is social interaction. (At least social interaction is _supposed to be_ also the end of the process, although many times it seems that Coe's suggestions lead from reflection to the knowledge of the better ideals--which _ought_ to guide the learner's next actions, as we shall see shortly.) Coe wants the educative process to deal with actual social experiences of the learners. The process tries to improve the learner's way of interacting by improving the use he makes of his experiences. The use the pupil makes of his social experiences is improved by means of reflection on his interactions. This is the phase of "Christian instruction" in which biblical, historical and scientific resources can be used to illumine present social life. In this "reflection" the learner is confronted both with the consequences of his actual conduct for others and with the needs others have. It is also in this phase of reflection/instruction that one's preferences and values are being examined and altered. The new values, acquired by discriminate or objective choosing, are supposed to express themselves in new social interactions, since the act of choosing them as one's own implies that they express what one desires to do. Thus a re-ordering of one's values brings about both a new outlook on life and a new way of ordering one's social world. The teacher has no direct way of controlling these changes. His role is limited to presenting and re-presenting reality--which includes the effects of conduct and the real needs of people--to the learner. The images of reality and the details they bring into the learner's awareness are the means of enabling the learner to change his seeing and doing. The reality of life and not ideas is the major teacher.

There are two major weaknesses in Coe's educative process which both stem from his "religion," i.e., his idealistic ontology. The first weakness is that Coe uses the learner's social experiences as "experiments" whereby they come to a rational and objective discovery of what the real values in life are, rather than using these experiences primarily to open up the challenge and possibility of responding to actual people in various situations. Coe's educational process is better equipped to teach young people the ideal of personality, than to set them free from egocentricity to respond to actual persons. Whether the teacher is helping the young with social adjustment or with their own social projects, the overriding project of the teacher is that the learner discovers and appropriates both the achieved values that are embodied in society and the aspired ideal of a true democracy of persons. Communicating the ideal--by a self-discovery model--is more important than imaging the reality of the learner's social world to him.

The second major weakness of the educative process in terms of trying to overcome direct communication lies in Coe's intellectualistic-evolutionary view of how a person comes to be concerned for the welfare of others and begins to respond by means of free, unprescribed, activity. The learner's mind is the direct access to God's social will, i.e., to the value of persons. The mind only has to function rationally and objectively and it will discover this divine value and therefore begin to be concerned for others. God is the principle of evolution which makes the learner evolve in his valuing. God is the choice within his choices making him choose the real, the social, over against the illusory and selfish. Thus the process of coming to free, social action is one of mental development or growth.

In his later years, Coe recognizes that people in fact often choose conventional, prescribed actions over free self-activity. But he does not leave his basic trust in the evolution of the intellect. Even fear of freedom and responsibility is turned into a problem of the intellect. The mind traps itself and therefore must and can release itself by using its own method of rational analysis of one's own conduct. The phenomenon which point to the conclusion that humans do not come to freedom and responsibility by mental development are interpreted by Coe as pointing to a blocked development. Because of this interpretation, Coe does not develop a separate educative process by which fear of responsibility, the desire for security, or personal integration in terms of some selfish control value can be overcome. Rather, Coe applies basically the same process which guides any discriminate choosing of the mind in order to set people free for self-activity in the social realm.

The reason for Coe's weaknesses. In looking back at our evaluation of Coe's educational aim and processes, we notice that Coe is moving toward and away from indirect communication at the same time. He wants to base his educational theory on the actual dynamics of human life in the "natural" world. He aims at helping pupils to move from a preoccupation with themselves toward a free and responsible involvement with the tasks of living in a society of persons. He proposes an educational process which is to begin and end with the actual daily interactions of the learners. He hopes to be able to change the patterns of their interactions by changing the "set of their minds," their outlook on life. In all of these attempts, Coe is moving toward "indirect communication" as the true nature of Christian education.

At the same time, Coe wants to develop a theory of education which ensures that his social ideal is transmitted to the next generation in such a way that it does not only affect their knowing, but also their doing. He aims at assisting learners to grow (by mental development) toward a devotion to his ideal of a democracy of God. He proposes an educational process which begins with the social ideal that is to become the central factor in the learners' hierarchy of desires and ends with teaching pupils to accommodate themselves to this superior value. In all of these attempts, Coe is moving away from indirect communication towards the direct transmission of an ideal.

What causes this ambivalence in Coe's design? Why is he ultimately not capable of overcoming the temptations of direct communication? The answer to these questions lies in Coe's inability to truly distinguish between the moral and the religious dimension of human life. For example, much of his Psychology of Religion is a treatise on the psychology of cognitive moral (valuational) development. Coe fuses the moral and the religious into one realm. The process and the goal of moral development are "religious," because the social ideal toward which development moves is affirmed as "real." Coe rejects the notion of a transcendent God, in favor of an immanent God, because he wants his educational theory to remain in the realm of the natural (i.e., Luther's "creation"). Yet he cannot give direction to the educational process without some notion of transcendence. So instead of relating education to a living God in and beyond the "natural," he introduces a transcendent ideal. The development of the valuing function of the mind, which is to lead to devotion to an ideal, replaces faith in an uncontrollable God as the source of daily responsiveness to the actual challenges of living.

Coe's inability to overcome direct communication flows out of his fusing of the moral and the religious dimensions of life, since the moral law that is written into the dynamics of social living is open to direct perception. The learner, according to Coe, has a direct access to "God." At two levels this direct access results in direct communication.

First, Coe cannot truly overcome "transmissive education." Since God's will is directly knowable as a specific social ideal, Coe can only change the method by which divine ideas are knowable and not re-examine the mode of divine-human communication that is implied whenever God's will is objectified. Coe rejects the method of transmitting so-called religious ideas directly to the minds of learners. He proposes self-discovery under guidance as the means for coming to know the real divine ideas. The end-product in both methods is knowledge of something considered to be divine or ultimately real, and not faith in God as the freedom to respond to the moral dimension of life.

Secondly, Coe cannot break the hold of sin. Since Coe identifies God also with an immanent principle of human (mental) development, he cannot uncover the mode of indirect communication that is made necessary by human sin. Coe has no concept of the "inner person" or "spirit" or "heart" as that dimension of the human which relates to God or creates its own gods (the self and its ideas) and which guides the use a person makes of his reasoning. As educator, Coe is therefore limited to devising means by which an immanent principle, i.e., the human mind, can be helped to unfold and mature. He deals with "growth," rather than with a "change of heart" or a "reversal of sin's perspective."

It is the important contribution of Randolph Crump Miller to the theory of Christian education to explore the religious dimension of human life in greater detail than Coe with his idealistic ontology could do. Miller alerts us to the difference in personal integration that is present when someone adjusts himself to an ideal or when he finds his personal center in a "living God" who keeps reality open to the future, unpredictable, and full of novelty. To consider his educational theory we now turn.

CHAPTER V

A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. The Clue to Christian Education

Coe had succeeded in drawing the attention of many religious educators away from a narrow focus on some "religious content" to be transmitted toward the process of responsible living and the role of religion in this process. The primary focus of many educators after Coe became the patterns and processes of human existence and of human learning as seen from secular and idealistic perspectives. In view of a religious education which had consciously or unconsciously adopted the perspective of secularists on the nature of the world and its people, Miller remarks:

> Too often it has seemed that theories of religious education have begun from a secular viewpoint with Christian theology as a footnote to a non-Christian perspective. It is our purpose to reverse this procedure and to use all secular insights as tools within the framework of Christian faith.[1]

This remark shows that Miller's writings mark a new shift of focus amongst religious educators.[2] The new focus is on a theological perspective of human life as the key to an adequate Christian education. Miller does not negate either scientific data or the need to base education on the processes of human life--rather than on dogmatic knowledge. However, he recognizes that all scientific data and all human experiences can be viewed from different perspectives. Christian education, therefore, must be based on a Christian view of the universe, the divine, and humans.[3]

By approaching Christian education from a theological perspective, Miller hopes to overcome both secular and idealistic views in education.

A theological view sees the universe, not as the unfolding of some idea or ideal, but as a movement of integrative and creative processes centered in a living God. This view has direct consequences in determining by what processes a person may come to wholeness or integration. Many researchers and educators realize that "a man's integration is in terms of the organic relation between himself and his environment, not in terms of ideas or values but in terms of the situation in which he finds himself."[4] The Christian educator must realize that the central element in a person's environment is the living God who is actively present in nature, social processes, history, and personal experiences of a power to do good which transcends the self.[5] If God is a reality and we can discern evidences of him at work in our world and experience, then the only adequate form of personal integration--which for many is the prime goal of secular or religious education--comes from "a deep and abiding personal relationship between God and man."[6]

If the theological view of the universe has any validity, then any attempts to lead learners to a personal integration which ignores the central element of their environment--an uncontrollable and creative God--are bound to fail. Thus Miller claims,

> The integration of the personality which is the goal of religious instruction can never be achieved in terms of ideals alone (as in character education), or of beliefs alone (as in indoctrination), or of social adjustment alone (as in much modern psychiatry).[7]

Miller, unfortunately, only hints at the reasons why integration in terms of ideals, beliefs, or social adjustment are inadequate for becoming whole and responsible persons, in contrast to an integration centered in God. We hear that a person centered on ideals becomes a self-righteous Pharisee. A person centered in religious knowledge often has little insight into the meaning of Christlikeness. And the trouble with those who have made good social adjustments is that they lack "the divine discontent which is the only motivation for making a better world."[8]

Miller also analyzes the human problem in reaching wholeness from a theological perspective. To him secular perspectives are inadequate in explaining the cause of the various symptoms of a lack of integration such as anxiety, tension, insecurity, and the exploitation of humans. And they are inadequate in finding a cure for this human predicament. Miller claims,

> No economic or sociological analysis is adequate to account for the situation in which man finds himself. . . . The Biblical view of man, who was offered Paradise and shunned it by an act of will, is a story of permanent significance for all mankind.[9]

The fundamental problem in human integration is that humans have broken their relationship with God and have therefore turned down the paradisaical life promised them. The result of this broken relationship with God is that our relationships are broken "on every level--personal, social and political."[10] Miller's diagnosis is that sin is the root problem of humans and the obstacle to integration.

Once the human problem is seen to be a spiritual issue which cannot be overcome by secular means, one has to find a spiritual cure. From his Christian perspective, Miller sees that the basic human need can only be met by God's action of redemption. God's redemptive activity is a process in history, seen most clearly in the life of Jesus, and made present by the Christian fellowship of the Church.[11] It is by means of the divine redemptive processes in the present that humans can find their relationships with God and their fellows restored. Christian education, therefore, must attempt to make these redemptive processes available to the learners.

Miller's theological perspective also shapes his view of the source and nature of human responsibility in the daily world. Moral action cannot be identified with setting up a system of ideals and then trying to implement them. A system of ideals tends to block one's view from the challenges and realities of a particular situation in which one finds oneself. A further danger in building up such a system is that one tends to absolutize one's own or someone else's relative views. The basis of an ethics which deals with real and processive life must be the will of the living God and not a set of ideals, according to Miller.[12] In each situation one must try to discern God's purpose and then align one's own purposes with him. To be able to do this one requires faith as a total commitment to God and his purposes. A set of ideals easily becomes a legal standard by which a religious person may try to measure his worth before God. Here there is no source of strength for responding to God's will in daily life. By way of contrast, faith is a genuine source of strength for responsible action, since it receives the power of God's grace.[13] Educators therefore must come to recognize the necessary religious dimension of human responsibility.

Because a theological perspective reveals data, problems and solutions for any attempt at educationally leading people toward integration and responsibility, which secular and idealistic perspectives have overlooked (and cannot see), Miller finds that theology gives him "the clue" to Christian education.[14] Miller's attempt to bring a theological perspective to bear on educational philosophy is his lasting contribution to Christian educators. He is pointing toward a way in which the narrow views on human integration and responsibility--such as those of secularism and idealism--can be overcome. He has discovered that the direct communication of ideals and moral standards leads neither to a person's ability to be responsive to his particular situation nor to an adequate personal integration in a world which is a complex movement of processes. A personal relationship to the living center of the universe is necessary for integration and moral responsibility. And a relationship of trust and personal commitment to the living God is beyond any means of direct communication or control by educators. The learners must become independently active. They must commit themselves and attempt to align their aims with God's in particular situations.

We now turn to examine to what extent Miller has been able to formulate educational aims and processes in keeping with a theological perspective on human existence. In this examination we will be able to see to what extent he has been able to move from the direct communication of religious and moral knowledge and of social adjustment (or "accommodation") to a given social group toward the indirect communication of relationships of trust and personal responsibility.

2. The Aim of Christian Education: A Right Relationship with God and One's Fellows

Even though the clue to Christian education is theology, this does not mean that the purpose of Christian education is to teach theology. Theology tries to articulate the "truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man."[15] Theology provides the knowledge of the nature and working of both God and man, "and of God's relationships to particular pupils."[16] This knowledge allows the educator "to place God and man at the center of the Christian educational method."[17] The central aim of Christian education is not the transmission of religious knowledge, but the establishment of relationships between humans and God and between humans and their fellow humans. Theology and its perspectives on life is the necessary tool for understanding the complexities of these relationships. Thus Miller can express the central aim of Christian education as follows:

> The purpose of Christian education is to place God at the center and

> to bring the individual into the right relationship with God and his fellows within the perspective of the fundamental Christian truths about all of life. . . .[18]

We turn to consider first the religious dimension and then the moral dimension of this statement of purpose.

a. The Religious dimension: a grace-faith relationship between God and individuals

Christian education is performing one part of its task "when the believer trusts in God and in turn God's gracious favor comes to him, because that grace was there all the time awaiting the act of faith."[19] What does Miller mean by the terms "grace" and "faith," to characterize the "right relationship" between God and an individual learner?

God's grace is a gift of undeserved love by means of which he reestablishes the right relationship between himself and sinful humans.[20] Humans who have broken their relationship with God, by refusing to align their aims with his purposes, experience--usually by the mediation of other people--that they are nevertheless accepted. This experience of undeserved love is not an irresistible force which binds people to God and conscripts them into his service. Rather it is a persuasive power.[21] This kind of grace saves our freedom and personal integrity. Rather than being overwhelmed, we commit ourselves to God, if we choose to accept the profferred relationship. If we accept the grace-relationship, we experience grace as a power of transformation which enables us to align our wills with his. We experience that both our commitments and our conduct changes under this persuasive love. We experience grace as a power that stimulates us to strive after endeavors of higher value than would normally be expected.[22]

Grace only becomes effective as a power of transformation and of strength to do God's will when it is received in faith. In the act of faith, a person trusts himself to this God of persuasive love. One can only experience grace when one trusts God, and one can only trust, because of the prior presence of grace. This interdependence of grace and faith, Miller explains as follows:

> It is the analogy of friendship writ large, for only as we have faith in a friend may we discover his faithfulness; that faithfulness may be there, awaiting the opportunity to express itself, but the grace of friendship operates only when the faith is there to receive it.[23]

If one can only get experiential evidence of God's trustworthiness and graciousness by the act of trusting him, what is the source of this act of trust? How can one begin to trust God when one's conscience accuses one of having ignored God's will? Or how can one begin to trust oneself to a trustworthy God, if one's daily experiences in life are full of ambiguity, insecurity and unpredictability? What has to happen for sinful humans to move from broken trust or distrust to a new relationship of trust? At this critical juncture, Miller does not think through the grace-faith relationship in relational terms. Rather he employs the model of an empirical theology. Thus he affirms that the same faith which "creates its own evidence" of God's trustworthiness and graciousness is also based on "right beliefs." "Right beliefs" in turn "arise from the evidence of what God has done for us and for all mankind."[24] Right beliefs are "approximations of reality" which can be "tested empirically" within the Christian, process-oriented, paradigm Miller has adopted.[25] It is on the basis of having attained some correct knowledge about the existence and nature of such processes to which the term "God" can be applied, that one takes--or refuses to take--the leap of faith by which one enters into the right relationship with this process or power.

Faith as "right belief" prepares the way for "commitment," which is the heart of faith. "Faith is the commitment of the total self to the process which makes possible creative living."[26] The empirical mode of looking for evidences of God's trustworthiness has its strict limits. Miller states "that although we must have enough knowledge of God to discern God's trustworthiness, it is only after the action of commitment that we gain greater knowledge of God."[27] One can summarize Miller's position by saying that the empirical knowledge of God as an entity with certain characteristics must give way to a relational knowing of God which only comes as one commits oneself to discern, and respond to, his will in daily life.

How, then, does one come to faith according to Miller? How does one come to receive God's grace? While Miller assumes humans to be sinners who have broken their trust-relationship with God, he does not describe the coming of faith in relational terms as a complex process of exchanging distrust with trust. He does not describe a process by which the relational misunderstanding of a broken relationship is reversed. Rather he describes a movement from faith-as-knowledge to faith-as-relationship. The transition is a "leap" or a free act of the will. The freedom to commit oneself to God is not a gift of grace by means of which God begins to restore humans to a right relationship with him. Freedom to commit oneself to God is a given of human nature which is not lost, even when one has broken one's relationship to God.[28]

Once the transition has been made from faith as "right belief" to faith as "total commitment" of the self to God, action inevitably follows. By committing oneself to that process which makes possible creative living, one begins to adjust oneself to those creative-integrative processes which increase value in the world. One's own goals are changed in this adjustment, and one becomes a channel for these processes to work themselves out in one's daily involvements in the world.[29] Thus whenever humans bind themselves to God in a relationship of trust, they inevitably are bound to their world and its people by moral action.

We now turn to consider this moral dimension of Miller's aim for Christian education.

a. The Moral dimension: treating other persons as ends in themselves

While Miller often states that the central aim of Christian education is to place God at the center of the curriculum and to bring individuals into a right relationship with him, the establishment of this religious relationship is never an end in itself. "It is a religious relationship which results inevitably in ethical action."[30] The right relationship with God brings people into a right relationship with one another. The right inter-human relationship can be described as "treating other persons as ends in themselves and not as means to satisfy our own desires."[31]

When people are treated as means to an end, they are being depersonalized. The personal is being sacrificed for someone else's political, social, or economic goals. There is, however, a "power of the personal" in the world which has not been destroyed by all the factors tending toward depersonalization.[32] Christians recognize the presence of God in our world in this power of the personal. To commit oneself to God and his purposes for the world therefore implies that one becomes a channel for this power of the personal to restore others to interpersonal relationships in which they are treated as ends in themselves. People who have a right relationship with God value others simply because they are human, rather than because of accomplishments, sex, race, or social class.[33]

That the right relationship with God results in individuals becoming channels of the power of the personal to fellow humans indicates that Christians have the responsibility to participate in God's ongoing creation of a human world.[34] Believers become the human mediation of God's creative and redemptive activity to fellow humans. Therefore Miller approves of Harvey Cox's claim that

> Men are responsible for the welfare of the world in which they are free to act, to choose, to obey, or to disobey. The Christian is not called to retreat from the world, except perhaps for a time in order to see more clearly his mission in it.[35]

To relate to God implies involvement and responsibility in the social, economic, and political realms of secular society. It is in all these areas that a commitment to a God who is present in his creation must express itself. "The rule of God is not just over individuals but also over society."[36]

The aim of enabling learners to relate to God in faith has the moral end of equipping them for responsibility in the complex world of humans. Religion has an ethical dimension, and ethics has a religious dimension. It is at this point where Miller most clearly parts way with Coe or other promoters of social idealism under the name of a social Gospel. These others considered themselves religious by insisting, e.g., "that modern social techniques and political theories can be directly derived from biblical teachings."[37] In the case of Coe, certain processes or theories became divine by being worshipped as expressions of ultimate reality. For Miller faith in an immanent yet transcendent God, and not the knowledge of a set of ideals or a particular social theory, is the religious dimension in ethics. This faith--by preserving the tension between Creator and creature--does not allow the idealistic identification of any religious, ethical, social, economic or political system with the will of God.[38] For Miller, the will of God is "not any particular set of laws; it transcends every list of rules, including the Ten Commandments. The will of God is dynamic, not static."[39] Faith is the source of ethical action by committing a person to discern what potentialities for good (or for the personal) there are in a situation. And faith gives the person the power to seek to realize this good within the limits of a particular situation. Every person has to decide for himself what God's will in a situation is. And everyone has to act on his own, without recourse to eternal theories or ideal systems. "This is the freedom of the individual person which God never takes from us."[40] Of course, a person is also free to give up this free activity in the ethical realm. But that would be a negation of faith in a living, not static, God.

As in the discussion on how one comes to faith, Miller assumes that the human freedom to decide and act--whether in the moral or spiritual realm--is a natural endowment of humans which cannot be lost. Therefore, he does not reflect on why people choose ideal prescriptions over free activity in the moral realm. Nor does he reflect on the need to make the re-establishment of free activity one of the goals in achieving the moral purposes of Christian education. Miller seems to assume that a person who is free to give up his moral free activity in favor of bondage to some system remains free to reverse the process. He does not seem to recognize that the choice against free activity is a religious choice, i.e., a commitment to some idea or prescription as one's center of meaning and integration.

In spite of this gap in Miller's reflection on moral action and its relation to one's religious relationship, it is clear that the moral aim of Christian education is not the transmission of a body of timeless ideals or rules. Rather the aim is to enable learners to value and protect the personhood of others in the various areas of their social existence. They can only find the appropriate responses to God's will in the various situations by means of free activity. It is in free activity that they become channels of the power of the personal.

In sum: The purpose of Christian education is, not to impart religious or moral knowledge, but to affect religious and moral relationships. The moral relationship of treating others as ends in themselves in various situations is dependent on a religious commitment to a living God, rather than to a set of ideals or to some lesser objects of loyalty. Also the religious relationship is not "right" unless it issues in moral action. One only has true faith in God when one's beliefs become guides to action.

We must now consider by what educational processes Miller hopes to achieve these relational aims. To what extent is Miller able to find the educational application of his theological-relational view of the process by which learners become faithful and responsible humans? Only as the educational processes reflect the issues and problems involved in relational understandings between God and humans--such as the problem of broken relationships and the moral challenge involved in a religious relationship--will Miller have moved from direct to indirect communication.

3. The Process of Christian Education: Nurture and Insight

In reflecting on the past and future of religious education, Miller surveys the different types of educational processes that have emerged from the work of various educational theorists--all of which are important for adequate religious education.[41] He lists education as nurture, as initiation into value attitudes, as discipline, as training in skills, and as insight. His own work has explored and emphasized Christian nurture and leading learners to moments of insight, since these processes are most vital in enabling learners to have a right relationship with God and their fellows. It is these two types of processes we must look at to understand Miller's major contribution to developing adequate educational interventions.

Miller describes Christian nurture as follows:

> Nurture is the involvement of the pupil in the atmosphere and relations of a community, including knowledge about it as a means toward loyalty to it. Christian nurture is the inclusion of the total person in all the relationships of life from the perspective of participation in the Christian community.[42]

Miller derives this view of nurture from Horace Bushnell. He also sees it being employed in some theories of socialization. The basic element of Christian education is not learning some idea about God, but participating in the social processes of the Christian fellowship. The educational aim is that a learner's loyalty to the Christian group will increase. Loyalty to the group and its ways hopefully will lead to a loyalty to "whatever transcends the group and commands the group's loyalty."[43] The quality of life of the group and its attractiveness to the individual is an essential element in a nurturing process that will make it likely for a commitment to the "transcendent" source of the group to occur. Thus nurture provides a concrete experience of God active in a human group. This experience--once it is interpreted as such--becomes the basis for an individual's commitment to a living and present God.

The concrete experience of God in human relations is not enough if a commitment to God is to occur. Nurture must lead to insight or the discernment of God's presence in life. Miller describes the function of education as insight as follows:

> In all processes of growth, there are moments of insight or disclosure when everything is seen in a new perspective. A pattern or paradigm is formed which enables us to realign the data and therefore to understand more clearly what the data mean. In all education, teachers need to work in such a way that new insights may emerge, although they cannot be guaranteed as the result of any method. . . . The insight is often followed by a new or deeper commitment.[44]

A distinctively religious insight occurs, when one begins to see God beneath the surface of natural and social events. One begins to realign one's data according to a theological perspective. One ends up with a new outlook on life and with a new moral approach to its challenges.

We will now look at both of these processes in some detail.

a. Christian nurture: the experience of redemptive relationships

With many secular educators, Miller agrees that education or personal development and integration is a social process. A person's integration comes, not from ideas, but from an organic relation between himself and his environment, as we heard. The social relationships one finds oneself in and grows up in thus play a vital role in one's development. We remember that this phenomenon led Coe to his "social theory of religious education." His focus was on the conjoint development of ego-consciousness with social consciousness, so that a person can only become fully human, as he recognizes his responsibility in treating the people he is related to as persons. Experiments in social living led the learners to a self-discovery of the personality principle as the key element in their environment. By way of contrast, Miller's key interest in the social process of education is not the dimension of moral responsibility and interrelatedness. His focus is on social processes as potential mediations of God's grace. In certain groups, individuals encounter "redemptive" relationships.[45] Here they experience a religious dimension to human interactions. They experience a living God as the central element of the environment which these groups create. An integration from an organic relation with this special environment is "a process of increased integration centered on the living God who is in our midst."[46] The nurture of these "redemptive" relationships amongst people becomes the basis for a learner's faith-grace relationship with God and for a good theology.

To understand how Christian nurture functions in Miller's scheme of Christian education, we first must understand how certain human relations are the means by which God's grace or redemption reaches the learners. Secondly, we must consider how these relations are means in the training of faith. Finally, we must look at human relationships as a means of giving a religious interpretation of life's questions and thus of providing a framework for one's future theology or religious beliefs.

For Miller, God's relationship to humans is a "drama of redemption" divided into five "acts," which have been acted out on the stage of human history.[47] The Bible tells the story of this drama, whose "acts" are: creation, covenant of the law, Christ, Church, and consummation. "It is a story of personal relationships between a divine personal being and human persons."[48] It is the story of God who acts to bring people into the right relationship with him. He established a personal relationship of Creator to creature in the act of creation. When humans broke this relationship by a free act of the will, God set about to heal the relationship. He first related to humans by a covenant of law, in which God promised to be their God, if they keep his law. When it became apparent that no human could keep the law on his own, God made redemptive and healing powers of grace available through faith in Christ. The Church is the present fellowship where these powers of grace, which were brought into the world by Christ, can be received by people. All humans face the judgment of God at the consummation. The key word in this story is redemption, since in all the changing relationships, God is seeking to redeem his people from their sinful condition of broken relationships. "The good news of the drama of redemption is that God has acted in Christ to draw us from our own selfish and ego-centered ways to a life of service of God and man."[49]

How do God's redemptive initiatives and actions, which have been played out in the past on the stage of history, reach learners today? How does God establish or restore a relationship between the learner and himself? Miller answers, in effect, that the changing relationships between God and humans are repeated in the changing relationships between the learner and his fellow humans.[50] The experience of broken interpersonal relations which are restored is not only an analogy for God's redemptive relationship to people. It is the experiential reality of God's redemption, when someone experiences the grace of undeserved love and acceptance--though he may not yet be aware of the divine dimension. There are two divine elements in the experience of restored interpersonal relations: the pattern and the power.

First, interpersonal relations are divine or "redemptive" insofar as they repeat the pattern of redemption that was revealed in one life, that of Jesus. He revealed that redemption comes through crucifixion and resurrection. "This pattern of death and new life, of being lost and found again, is basic to the healing of all our relationships," says Miller in drawing the lesson from Christ's death and resurrection.[51] In a different context, Miller can say that death and resurrection is the basic motif of Christian living. This motif is a "relationship which all of us experience in one way or another. In the puppy-love stage it is 'kiss and make up', but it is still heartbreak followed by healing, and the kiss symbolizes a new as well as a restored relationship."[52] As these quotes show, Miller considers the experience of human rejection followed by an experience of acceptance to be a repetition of the redemptive pattern of Christ's dying for the sake of new life. The spiritual redemption from sin--i.e., from one's ego-centric to a theo-centric integration--which was the work of Christ in history is thus identified with the personal redemption from loneliness and from a sense of being rejected by others. Miller is consciously trying to "translate" the Biblical faith and its story of redemption into "the non-Biblical language of another age." He chose to translate the story into the "language of relationships."[53] He felt he could translate the story of the religious relationship between humans and God in the language of interpersonal relationships, because of the similarity in the grammar--or "patterns"--which describe any relationships between two beings.

The second divine element in the experience of restored interpersonal relations is, according to Miller, the power which enables humans to restore relationships by expressing an undeserved love to others. People can only help one another to become and remain persons by means of the "power of the personal."[54] This power is a gift of God's grace which one can only receive when one has committed oneself to God in faith. Thus to experience undeserved love or a forgiving acceptance which restores human relations is to experience the presence of God in the power of the personal. It is this divine power which is expressed in the "quality of group life" that should characterize the Christian home and the Church.[55]

God's ongoing redemptive activity is thus, according to Miller, mediated to individuals through the pattern and power of certain personal relationships. For learners to have a present access to the "drama of redemption," they must therefore be nurtured in "redemptive" relationships of being accepted as they are, even when they feel they do not deserve this acceptance. Christian nurture does not automatically lead learners to identify the "drama of redemption" as their own story. It cannot force learners to commit themselves to God. However, Christian nurture does provide a direct experiential access to God and his redemption. A "redemptive experience" or an experience of the personal is the necessary condition, if a learner is to come to the "right belief" about God's existence. "Right beliefs," as we heard, are the condition for faith as commitment and action.

Christian nurture in Miller's scheme of Christian education does not only provide the experiential basis for knowledge about a gracious, redeeming God. It also provides the basis for the human response of faith to an offer of grace. The basis of a grace-faith relationship with God is the establishment of a grace-faith relationship in the human dimension. How does one learn to have faith? Miller says, "Faith is always a response to some*one*. The child trusts his parents because they have already given him their love."[56] The gift of undeserved love is "grace" on the human dimension. This grace calls for the response of trust or faith. Children trust parents or other adults because they have shown themselves as trustworthy. When an adult betrays their trust, "he also undercuts their capacity for faith."[57] It is virtually impossible for a child who has learned that he cannot trust anyone to begin trusting an invisible God. Since, according to Miller, only those adults can offer undeserved love to children--even when they are most demonic--who themselves have a trust-relationship with God, the child's trust and loyalty to trustworthy humans can gradually lead to a trust and loyalty to the being who stands behind these people. Thus the experience of human love provides the capacity for religious faith.

Finally, Christian nurture of redemptive relationships begins the process of developing right religious beliefs and attitudes in the learners.[58] There are basic needs and questions which belong to "the permanent religious requirements of mankind."[59] What are these needs and questions? Miller replies,"Long before a child can talk, he is seeking to know who he is, who you are, what the world is like, where he came from and where we are going."[60] A child receives the answers to these questions in terms of relationships. For example, "He senses where he came from by whether or not he is wanted and loved. And the fears and anxieties or the faith and commitment of his parents prepare him for the answer to his question, Where are we going?"[61] Thus the parents' ways of relating to the child express their religious interpretation of life, i.e., their fundamental commitments. Before and after words have meaning to a child, relationships are a "language" in the sense that their way of ordering the world for the child is either a good or a bad religious interpretation. Relationships communicate a world view: i.e., a view of the world's beginning and purpose, and of the worth and role of the people in it. During the whole process of growing up, the child is receiving answers to his quest for meaning from parents or other significant adults--whether they are aware of it or not. By growing up within relationships, the child receives "the basic stuff of a good or bad theology."[62]

By the time a child comes to the Church school, his idea of God and his motivation for behavior and a whole framework for his future theology is already influenced decisively by the relationships he knows best. Permanent damage can have been done, which greatly will decrease the possibility of a child growing up to a mature faith-grace relationship with God.

therefore it is essential that parents provide the necessary Christian nurture right from birth. If the child is to come to the religious belief that he is a redeemed creature of a loving Creator, he must be the result of an act of love. The parents must express that they want him. They must also confront the child with the moral law by means of their dependableness. And the parents must be able to forgive the child and express love when it is not deserved. On the basis of these experiences, the child will be able to accept the drama of redemption as his own story as he grows older.[63] He will have experienced "creation" through the love of parents behind whom stands a loving Creator. He will have experienced the "covenant" in the encounter with moral law and dependable order. He will have experienced the redemption made possible by Christ in the acts of parental forgiveness.

In sum: The function of Christian nurture is to provide the learners with experiences of redemptive relationships first, so that they have a concrete experience of God's grace, secondly, so that they develop the capacity for future faith by learning to trust humans, and thirdly, so that they develop right religious beliefs or at least the framework of a good theology. While these "redemptive" experiences do not automatically lead people to a faith-commitment to God, they are nevertheless the necessary access to the reality of God in the world.

How can this nurture of redemptive relationships be accomplished? For Miller this nurture cannot be accomplished in any community which lives only "within the horizontal dimension of human relationships."[64] Such communities could be either opposed to or neutral to the aims of Christian nurture. They may even have redemptive elements, such as when they give a genuine sense of acceptance to its members.[65] However, only those communities or groups which have access to the "power" of God's grace truly reflect the redemptive "pattern" of seeking the lost and of opening the lives of its members to the healing grace of God. Only those who are aware of God's suffering and redemptive love for them can truly heal broken relationships by the unmerited gift of love.[66] According to Miller, God himself has set up a specific community which is to be the channel of his grace: the Christian Church. The initial cell of this Church is the Christian family.

The Church (which includes the ministry of Christian parents or of the Christian family) can only accomplish the three functions of Christian nurture, if the quality of its fellowship is such that it reflects and mediates God's drama of redemption. It must provide its members a sense of belonging and of forgiving acceptance within the framework of a dependable order. It must reflect that worship of God is the source of its power to meet the needs for order, growth and acceptance. The church fellowship must show forth the truth of God in its life. To help the church examine the quality of its life, Miller uses questions derived from the marks of any educative community that Marjorie Reeves has established in her book Growing Up in a Modern Society. He asks,

> Do all the members recognize themselves as subject to the rule of law? Do all members treat each other as persons? Does each member find a significant part to play and see the purpose of this participation? Is there some purpose greater than self-interest at the center of the group's loyalty? Is there enough mixture of interest and personality to make genuine tensions and differences certain to occur?[67]

Through these questions, we can see what the Church, the Christian family, and individual groups within the congregation must be, if the quality of their life is to be an experience of God as Creator and Redeemer. And this experience, as Miller notes, is "crucial" to the whole process of Christian education.[68] However, Miller also remarks that looked at empirically, the Church does not by and large reflect this quality of life.[69] Often, e.g., the congregational community is made up of leaders and members unaware of their own insecurities. Thus they cannot minister to the basic sense of lostness of people.[70] Or again, groups in the Church may become ends in themselves, rather than having God as the end.[71] On the most basic level, the dilemma of providing any clearly redemptive relationships on the human level is that even mature adults are normal human beings "with all the weaknesses, anxieties, stresses, strains, and sins of humanity."[72] As a result they neither reflect the meaning of creation or of the covenant of the law, or of redemption "in a consistent and secure manner."[73] Christians remain sinners, even in their interpersonal relationships. In spite of all his insights into actual congregations and into the actual nature of the best human relationships, Miller is not willing to conclude that the quality of life of Church and home remains an ambiguous experience. Miller cannot come to this conclusion, since the function of Christian nurture in the total scheme of Christian education can only be accomplished, if Christian fellowship provides unambiguous, experiential evidence of God in terms of their relationships.

In studying the intrinsic connection in Miller's thought between the achievement of Christian nurture and the existence of true Christian community--as a redemptive fellowship--Sara Little concludes:

> The picture Miller draws is appealing. It motivates one to want the dream to become a reality. But if Christian education is viewed as dependent upon the existence of true Christian community, then it is impossible.[74]

Little sees Miller's description of the Christian community as a "dream," i.e., as a projection of an ideal which can never quite be reached. However, in Miller's model of education, his concept of the quality of the

Christian fellowship cannot be merely an ideal prescription for the Church. The true Christian community with the above-noted characteristics must exist in this world, else people would have no experience by which to point to the reality of a redeeming God.

On the strength of his belief that actual Christian groups and families can be genuine "redemptive communities" as reflected in their relationships, Miller states that loyalty to the Church "is the fundamental social experience of being a Christian."[75] By actively participating in a vital Christian fellowship, individuals will receive the necessary nurture that prepares them for the "leap of faith" by which they transfer their loyalty from the fellowship to God and his purposes. The fellowship provides those experiences which are necessary for insight and commitment.

b. Christian insight: the interpretation of experience

According to Miller's aim for Christian education the grace-faith relationship between God and humans is to remain in the foreground of the educational process. Therefore the role of Christian nurture was to provide concrete experiences of God's creative and redemptive activity and to develop the child's capacity for future faith. Human relationships of trust and acceptance--i.e., the grace-faith relationship in the human dimension--are the mediation and concrete experience of God's activity. God not only uses human means to carry out his creative and redemptive work. He is also the source of power which makes it possible for humans to act in "redemptive," forgiving ways. But how is the transition to be made from the grace-faith relationship in the human dimension to this relationship in a divine dimension? How does the "language of relationships" become religious or spiritual communication, so that a person does not only feel rejected and accepted by humans, but he sees himself before God? How do human relationships begin to bring about a religious integration of the learner, so that he will find his center of worth and meaning in a living God--and not in an idea or in "the group"?

For Miller the transition from faith in humans to faith in the God who stands behind these humans is prepared for in the educational phase of "Christian insight." Learners must be led to discern God's presence in their life, if they are to transfer their loyalty from some group or its ideas to God. And discernment hinges on an interpretation of one's experiences. If the grace-faith relationship is to remain in the foreground, then discernment would have to reflect the dynamics of a relational understanding of God's grace. It would have to reflect the challenges--moral and personal--a person faces when confronted with the possibility of accepting a gracious God as central to one's way of looking at all the experiences of life. We now must examine Miller's notions of Christian insight to see whether they reflect a relational understanding of how a person relates to God's grace.

Christian insight comes, as all valid insight, from the interpretation of experience, according to Miller. Miller repeats variations of this phrase in his educational writings from 1950--the time of The Clue to Christian Education--to the present. The repetition hides from the casual reader of Miller's writings that his notion of "interpretation" and of the "experience" to be interpreted shifts throughout the years. In his early writings as represented by The Clue and Biblical Theology and Christian Education, "interpretation" means basically that learners are gradually led to form right concepts--i.e., "right beliefs"--about the nature of God, the creature, the Church, the world, prayer, and human behavior, etc.

The educator searches out those special experiences in the learners' lives which are open to a "Christian interpretation of life."[76] It is interesting to note that during this phase of Miller's thinking, special experiences are used to illumine and validate traditional Christian doctrines. The experiences show that theology is "relevant." The primary focus of this interpretation process is on inculcating a "Christian interpretation--which Miller also refers to as "right beliefs," "Christian truth," "Christian perspective," or a "relevant theology." The movement of the process is from experience to concept-formation, from the concrete and particular to theological generalizations. This conceptual knowledge is, then, to be the basis for commitment to the living God in one's own particular life and situations.

Beginning with Christian Nurture and the Church, published in 1961, and coming to a full expression in The Language Gap and God, published in 1970, Miller's notion of "interpretation" shifts to mean the process by which religious language or stories reflecting a Christian perspective on life are used to illumine daily experiences. The educator must move the learners away from conceptual thinking to "image-thinking." He must move away from general statements to a language that deals with characteristically personal situations and with commitment. The challenge to the educator is to communicate with "the language of the heart," not of the mind.[77] Commitment to the living God comes when a person is addressed in his own personal situation so that he discerns a "new dimension" in his daily experiences. Discernment is very closely linked to commitment. In this second notion of "interpretation," coming to "know" God's presence in the world is much more closely linked with one's personal ways of relating to, and seeing, one's daily life, than in the first notion where the result is theological, general knowledge.

Because of this shift from a more objective to a more relational understanding of the process of "interpretation," we will describe the two understandings separately. We will first consider Christian insight as "leading to right beliefs" and then as "leading to a discernment of God in daily life."

i. Leading to Right Beliefs

In The Clue, Miller states, "The battleground of religious living is the area of faith rather than belief, of experience rather than dogma, of grace and forgiveness rather than creeds."[78] The central concern of the educator is the relationship between learners and God. How, then, can one explain the format of this book? After the introductory chapter which gives us "the clue" to Christian education as being a relevant theology in the background, the next chapters are on Christ, God, creature, Church, grace, faith, etc. Each of these chapters is divided into two parts. The first part gives a brief theological exposition of the nature and function of Christ, God, creature, etc. The second part then deals with educational problems in teaching these theological insights to different age-levels. E.g., the introductory statement to the teaching-section on Christ says, "As we turn to the problem of teaching a sound Christology to children and young people in the curriculum of Christian education, we are faced with the issues which we have just discussed [i.e., in the theological section]."[79] Teaching is dealing, not with the faith-grace relationship and the "battleground of religious living," but with beliefs and theological truths about Christ. In the next chapter, the educational section deals with "the problem of teaching the meaning of God."[80] This meaning will be taught in terms of concrete experiences, history, or philosophical ideas according to the age-level of the learners. Again the next chapter deals in its educational section with the needs of various age-groups "in approaching the Christian doctrine of man."[81] In all these chapters--and the following ones--, theology is in the foreground of the actual teaching situations. Rather than the relationship of God and humans being in the foreground, it is the "truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man"--as Miller defines theology.[82] The difference between the two focuses is that between the challenges of relating to, or being addressed by, God and the challenges of knowing about God. It is a shift from the "battleground" of living, to the study.

The same format is followed in Biblical Theology. However the sequence of the theological truths discussed is that of the "drama of redemption," namely: creation, covenant, Christ, church, consummation. There is also a greater emphasis on showing how these truths of the Bible are present in the learner's lives in the "language of relationships." The relationships become the basis for the Biblical words and concepts to have meaning. Thus Miller is now more concerned with the experiential basis for coming to know the truth of Biblical theology.

How do we explain the format of these books which put theology or its experiential basis in the foreground of the teaching-learning sections, if grace and faith--as relational realities, not concepts--are to be in the foreground? Miller does not consider this shift from "relating" to "knowing about" as inconsistent with his relational aims. Rather, discovering and knowing the theological truths is a stage on the way to a faith-relationship. As Miller puts it, "We have faith in a God we know, and this involves belief."[83] Faith, we remember, is based on belief. And beliefs are approximations of reality based on evidence. These books therefore reflect the educational task of leading learners to come to right beliefs. At this stage of Miller's educational theory, the educator's interpretation of experience is not a way of mediating God to the learners. The interrelational experiences of nurture are the mediation of God. The interpretation of experience is done to validate religious views about the nature of God, humans, and their world. Interpretation is not done so that the God who stands behind "the human dimension" can address and challenge the learners explicitly. Miller feels that the process by which a trust-relationship develops between the learner and God must be left in the hand of God. The educator can only provide nurture and the information of religious beliefs.[84] Because of the limit placed on educators in terms of affecting the religious relationships of learners, the format of these two early writings help educators with discovering and imparting "the relevance of Christian truth."[85] Within the self-imposed limits of these books, we thus cannot expect Miller to overcome the basic format of teaching religious concepts and doctrines which has characterized so much of Christian education in the past. What we can expect is that the religious knowledge will be "relevant" to the lives of learners in the sense that the knowledge will come as a result of reflection on experience. In contrast to the dogmatic teaching of the past, Miller moves away from indoctrination of Christian truths to a self-discovery of relevant Christian truths.[86]

Once we recognize that the aim of these two books is to teach Christian truth about God, humans, the world and their interrelationships, we must consider by what process truth or right beliefs can be acquired. The educational method for imparting truth must reflect the process by which truth can be known. Miller's epistemology is the key to understanding the educational process.

According to Miller's epistemology, "truth may be acquired only through the interpretation of experience."[87] This epistemology applies equally to the truths of science and the truths of revelation. Miller's theory of knowledge is based in empiricism, though empirical truths are not adequate to answer all the needs of religious living.[88] Prophets, seers, and others of especially appreciative minds have insight into religious truths and patterns which are beyond the narrower confines of a strictly empirical method. These people often express their insights in terms of analogies, myth, poetry, or symbols. Thus, to benefit from these insights, theology has to go "beyond empiricism" to the use of an analogical theology. But the basis of all religious knowledge in the common experience of mankind may not be lost, if one is to avoid arbitrary claims to truth.[89]

For Miller "revealed truths" are "empirical truths."[90] What does he mean by the adjective "empirical"? His answer is found in his definition of empiricism. "Empiricism is simply the appeal to experience for the discovery and testing of truth."[91] Thus revealed truths are accepted as religious knowledge when they are based in, and tested by, the common experience of humans. While experience is the basis, and test of, truth or knowledge, it is not truth by itself. Rather, experience "provides the data which by means of interpretation and evaluation can lead to concepts which are approximate representations of reality as it is experienced."[92] One has only come to secular or religious knowledge, when one can formulate concepts which fit the data one has experienced. The validity of such religious concepts as "a creative and loving God" or the notion of "human sin" lies in the ability of these concepts to best explain the data of experience. The moment when someone finds a religious concept or interpretation which best fits the data of experience, revelation has occurred.

Thus revelation does not represent a special type of epistemology. It simply refers to "the coincidence of event and appreciation."[93] Revealed truths refer to objective reality and are therefore empirically verifiable.

If one comes to religious knowledge or right beliefs in the same way as one comes to valid knowledge about any part of objective reality, then the basic obstacles to knowledge are either a lack of experiences that provide a certain type of evidence and/or a lack of awareness of the religious concepts and interpretations which best fit the experienced data. Within this empirical epistemology, Miller cannot link religious knowing with the challenge of coming to self-recognition and with coming to accept moral responsibility. Where religious knowing has to do with self-understanding and responsibility, a major obstacle to religious knowledge could be a person's fear of responsibility or his unwillingness to face up to himself. While Miller's aim for Christian education intrinsically connects a person's religious and moral relationships, his theory of knowledge does not.

How, then, does Miller explain the phenomenon that many people do not come to religious knowledge or to an appreciation of religious meaning in the experiences of their lives? How does Miller explain the need for "special revelation" as represented most clearly in Christ as a revelation of God? For Miller, people's inability to see religious meanings in the events of life and their dependence on "special revelations" comes from the weakness of their appreciative faculties. Miller remarks that we may not be perceptive enough to find the religious patterns on our own, but "we can see the truth of the matter when it is pointed out to us."[94] We are dependent on special revelation, that is, on "specially revealing events" whose meaning has been discerned by "specially appreciative minds."[95] We, who are less perceptive and less inspired, can see the objective truth of the matter, once these few religious geniuses have pointed it out to us. Thus even the "supreme revelation" of God in Christ is not basically made necessary because of the blindness caused by human sin, but because of our natural perceptive limits. In Jesus' life "we can see what men had not seen so clearly or so completely before."[96] Jesus provides us with the best image and interpretations of God.

Miller's educational method which he advocates in his early writings reflects his empirical understanding of the notion that "truth may be acquired only through the interpretation of experience." In relating religious truths to the lives of learners, the educator must be concerned both with showing the experiential basis of a given concept and with expressing the concept in forms that can be understood by the learners. In both concerns, the educator comes up against the phenomenon of age-level characteristics. Both the range of experiences and the ability to interpret experiences, so as to find religious meaning in them, grows with age. Thus in leading learners toward religious knowledge, the educator must be aware of both an experiential and a cognitive development in pupils.[97] To underline the importance of developmental or stage theory for teaching religious knowledge, Miller subdivides the teaching sections of both The Clue and Biblical Theology according to age-levels. For each age-level, he points out what experiential access the learners have to the doctrine being taught. And he indicates the level of complexity the understanding of concepts may take on. Miller, of course, also points out in various sections, how the necessary experiences can be provided to the learner. But that is an element of Christian nurture, while, at present, we are concerned with the educational processes of Christian insight.

In The Clue, we can see Miller's first attempt at guiding teachers to bring together experience and Christian truth in a way appropriate to each age-group. In discussing how one can teach the Christian doctrine of a Triune God, Miller says, "If the Triune God is true we can find evidences of him at work in the experiences of a child as well as of an adult."[98] It is these "evidences," which make it possible to teach about God as a reality from an early age on. Learners can discover who God is "by the study of his handiwork in nature, in history, in society, and in individuals."[99] Here is the data which can lead learners to a self-discovery of the truth that the concept "God" is an approximation of reality. The teacher must be aware of the range of the learners' experiences, so he can select an appropriate approach to the doctrine of God. Where does God become real for the primary child? Miller answers, "There are all the experiences of birds and bees and worms, of plants and gardens, of Christmas and Easter rituals in the home, of grace at meals and evening prayers, of adjustment to the class at Church school."[100] (It is noteworthy that neither here nor elsewhere does Miller distinguish different "types" of evidences of God's presence. Thus he does not reflect on the difference between God's presence in nature and social processes (e.g., in the challenge of adjustment to the class) and the more symbolic or significatory presence of God in worship, rituals and prayer.) Because of changing interests and experiences in the growing child, the teacher must point out a different kind of evidence of God's reality to older children. Miller says, "With the fourth or fifth grader, the approach should be primarily through the lives of great heroes of past and present, tying in the laws of sportsmanship and goodness. The heroic stature of men and women in whom God is at work can be deeply appreciated."[101] And again for an older age group, such as in high school, the teacher can point out evidences of God at work in history. By leading the learners to study this accumulation of evidence, the teacher lets them discover both that a God exists and what the nature of this God is. The learner becomes like a scientific experimenter who is led to discern an object and its qualities separate from its relationship to the observer. Right knowledge of the object "God" as an entity out there precedes any possibility for understanding God's relationship with us. As Miller summarizes his approach, "We need the perspective of God at work beyond us before we can understand what God has done for us."[102]

In this example of teaching the truth about God, we can see that Miller's prime concern is to point out which "evidences" can be used at different age-levels. Very little effort is spent in dealing with the issue of "interpretation." That the different natural, social, historical or individual experiences should be interpreted as the presence of a gracious-creative God seems almost self-evident. The learner's relationship--of trust or distrust--to this God does not interfere with his ability to observe God's presence and to name or label it as such. The one difficulty in interpretation which Miller does discuss in the section on God is the issue of finding concepts or expressions that can be understood by the given age-group. He says, "The difficulty for most of us, even though we have mastered fundamental ideas about the Christian God, is to alter our adult and technical vocabularies sufficiently to express the basic ideas in Basic English."[103] Thus the teacher must be aware that certain concepts, theological complexities, and the skill of abstract thinking are beyond the learners in the younger age-levels. In sum: the challenge of interpreting the "evidence" of God in experience can be met once the teacher is aware of the dynamics of cognitive development in the learners.

A second illustration of Miller's method in bringing together concrete experience with Christian doctrines according to the "first attempts" of The Clue can be made more briefly. In trying to teach the Christian doctrine of the nature of humans,[104] Miller wants the learners to gain a "balanced view" which includes "the paradoxical nature of man as a child of God and as a sinner at the same time."[105] The experiential access to this doctrine is, according to Miller, easily had, since it deals with the learners themselves and their own experiences. The child experiences goodness and evil both in himself and in other people. As soon as age permits it, the child can be led to "analyze his own behavior." His self-understanding of why he is "bad" sometimes can be used as a basis for analyzing the behavior of others. This ability to generalize from his own experience of goodness and sin lets him begin to develop a Christian doctrine of humans.[106]

Again the interpretative problems in leading learners to see themselves as God's creatures and yet as sinners are primarily related to cognitive development. Miller remarks, "While the formal doctrines of original sin and the 'image' of God will not be introduced as such among the youngest ones, it will be possible to build up attitudes which make possible an acceptance of a balanced view of man in their later thinking."[107] The proper attitudes for a later acceptance of the doctrine come when the parents and teachers portray neither a pessimistic nor a one-sidedly optimistic picture of humans. By the time the learners are in high school, they can deal with such complex issues as distinguishing between two types of sin: the sin of pride, where "man puts himself in place of God and seeks to control the destiny of his fellows," and the obvious type of sin of unethical behavior.[108] Once the learners are pointed toward illustrations of these types of sin, the interpretation of them is easily made.

At least Miller does not reflect on any resistance to the truth which may be present in the learners when they are to interpret their own behavior as evidence that they are putting themselves and their ideas in the place of God. The challenge of interpretation is to put the truth in non-technical language.[109]

Miller's approach to teaching the truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man is carried on in Biblical Theology and Christian Education. In the preface to this second attempt, Miller states, "If I was right in The Clue that theology can be taught in terms of relationships at any age, then perhaps the Bible as a record of the mighty acts of God in history can be taught in the same way."[110] Rather than having the learners discover and validate the truth of various Christian doctrines in their relational experiences, Miller now has them discover and validate the truth and meaning of the theology expressed in the stories of the Bible. By what method can teachers transmit the meaning and relevance of the Bible to people of various ages and degrees of intelligence--i.e., of different stages of experiential and cognitive development? If we as teachers are to understand the Biblical truths and to transmit them, we must recast Biblical theology "in such a way that the relationship it depicts will be correlated with the relationships we know in our daily lives."[111]

The task of recasting the five acts of the drama of redemption, which describes the changing relationships between God and humans, so that they can be correlated with the relationships which the learners know in daily life, occupies most of the book. Miller translates the various "acts" or "events" of how God has acted to redeem humans into "the language of relationships" that exists between humans.[112] As such, Biblical Theology is probably Miller's most detailed book on Christian nurture, since the "mighty acts of God" are "translated" into processes of nurture. Parents and teachers are led to see how they must mediate God's acts, beginning with creation and ending with the consummation (i.e., the experience of judgment). They are led to see the relational needs and possibilities of the various age-groups.

At present, when we are concerned with processes of Christian insight, we must focus on how teachers are to use Biblical stories to lead learners to discover the relevant truths they contain. The Bible is a means to let the learners see the drama of redemption, or the relationships between God and them, in their own lives.

According to Miller, the relationships between God and humans which the Bible describes are (at least potentially) present to children from the moment of birth. They experience acceptance, dependable order, the freedom to grow, forgiveness which restores relationships, etc., from their parents and later from other significant adults and other groups. The reality to which the Biblical drama points is therefore present in "the language of relationships"--at least, if Christian nurture has taken place. Biblical stories themselves, or the "words" of the Bible, do not present a different kind of spiritual communication from "the language of relationships." "The great words of Biblical theology can be taught through this language of relationships,"[113] says Miller, since as we saw, relationships answer a person's basic religious questions about one's own worth, purpose, and the meaning of life.[114] The Biblical "words" or Biblical stories do not, at this stage of Miller's writing, function as the primary agent in opening up a new dimension to one's daily, ambiguous experiences. Rather they serve to identify and label what one has experienced. Words of the Bible are generalized representations of reality. They allow people to identify "all like experiences."[115] Thus, we can see that in Biblical Theology the "interpretation" of experiences by means of religious words has not developed beyond the notion of The Clue. "Interpretation" is basically a process of concept-formation or applying the right concept to describe a certain experience. Biblical stories are, at best, illustrations of relational truths which the learner has experienced.

Since Bible stories illustrate the relational truths of Biblical theology, the teacher's use of them depends on the experiential and cognitive development of the learners. Understanding Biblical stories is, therefore, more of a developmental than a spiritual-relational problem. Miller does note that when the Bible is used to identify and describe our experiences, "it also brings us to a new perspective on our condition."[116] However in his aids to teachers, Miller does not reflect on teaching Biblical stories in such a way that they can expose and change the learners' present perspectives and interpretations of their lives. Miller uses an objective or empirical hermeneutics. If the drama of redemption is a reality, then it can be pointed out to learners and they can learn to use Biblical words to identify it, once they are old enough. Miller feels that juniors (between Grades 3 and 6) are ready to observe and identify basic elements of the drama. "They can see the drama of redemption at work in their own lives, and this can now be pointed out by the use of words to describe their condition."[117] They are capable of observing the drama, because they can now do an elementary analysis of how they cameinto their own families and into the Church. They see God at work through their parents and in the Christian fellowship, when they do this analysis. They also see their own sin or broken relationship with God when they analyze the way they have rejected the fellowship of family and Church.[118] Because of their analysis of their condition, they now find the Biblical stories of creation (which includes the Fall) as relevant descriptions of their own lives. The stories show their truth-value. Thus at a certain stage of development Biblical stories can be used to convey theological truths, because the learners now can analyze experiences and identify them with words. "Interpretation" is--as in The Clue--a matter of observation and identification which is dependent on the learners' cognitive development.

Aside from a cognitive readiness to use "words" to describe one's condition, the learners can only understand Biblical stories, if they have parallel experiences to those of the characters in the stories. The teacher must, therefore, be aware of the experiential readiness of learners to understand the stories. The crucial experiences for understanding any of the stories of the Biblical drama of redemption are experiences of rejection and acceptance on the human level. Miller sees in these experiences the basic pattern of redemption, as we showed above. The stories can be understood by the learners, when they can see in them a reflection of their own experiences of relating to others. For example, when Miller shows how the various stories in Genesis 3-11 relate to junior highs, he says:

> Chiefly, they will be able to identify themselves with the characters in these stories as they reflect the adolescent experiences of feeling cast out, of rebellion against those who stand for goodness and truth, of being judged as unworthy, and of forming their own language barrier against adult interference. These parallels to the Bible story in their relationships are essential for seeing the religious dimension of our teaching.[119]

At least to me it remains unclear how "the adolescent experiences" and feelings allow the learners to see the religious dimension either of our teaching or of the Biblical stories. The so-called parallel experience between humans rebelling against God, receiving God's judgment and being cast away from his presence and humans rebelling against humans and experiencing human rejection are at best analogous on the level of feelings--similar feelings caused by dissimilar events and relations. Miller would not be satisfied with using the experiences of the learners as mere analogies for some element or feelings that also occur in one's relationships to some center of meaning. Rather Miller wants the experiences to be "parallel." That is, they are to be mediations of God, so that the stories can help the learners to see God at work in their interpersonal relations. The experiences must have a religious dimension so that the learners can identify or label them by means of the words of the story. In sum: for Miller the interpersonal experiences of rejection or acceptance have a religious dimension to them. As a result, the learners are experientially ready to understand the religious dimension of the Biblical stories. The stories point out or identify that God is at work in these relationships.

In looking back at both The Clue and Biblical Theology, we can see that at this stage of Miller's own thought, Christian insight is the process by which one comes to right beliefs or religious knowledge about God's relations to humans and to the world. Christian doctrines or Biblical stories are conceptual representations of these religious relationships. The learners can come to know the truth of the concepts once they experience their reality and learn to identify this reality by means of theological words. The learners' commitment to God or to some alternate center of loyalty is not a major issue in coming to correct knowledge about God and his relations to humans. The major issues which educators have to face is not the learners' religious relationships and present perspective, but rather their experiential and cognitive development. The teacher must see to it that the learners have certain kinds of experiences on the human level and then that they can identify these experiences by the words or concepts of Christian theology. Whether the resulting religious knowledge will lead the learners to trust God and commit themselves to him as their center of integration as the teachers hope, is beyond their control. Where Christian insight is a process by which learners come to right beliefs about the nature of reality, there insight and commitment are quite separate processes.

ii. Enabling learners to come to a discernment of God in daily life

Beginning somewhere around 1961--when Christian Nurture and the Church was published, Miller devotes more of his studies and writings to the challenges of Christian communication. He gains first of all a new awareness of the nature and function of the religious language of words, as he studies Ian T. Ramsey's notions on religious language. Canon Drinkwater's and Horace Bushnell's thoughts on "the language of the heart" also occupy him, soon after he began to explore this whole issue. By the time of The Language Gap and God (1970), Miller has surveyed many writers on religious language and language philosophy--with the noteworthy exception of the "New Hermeneutic" school of thought, H. G. Gadamer, and the hermeneutics of Pannenberg and Moltmann. Miller's selection of writers to be studied has screened him from the thought of those authors who come closest to seeing "the language gap" between humans and God in relation not so much to culture as to sin. Secondly, Miller's thought on Christian communication leads him to explore more deeply the relation of Christian insight to the challenges and responsibilities of living in a secular society. Christian insight must allow people to commit themselves to discern and do God's will in daily life.

Before we examine how these two new interests affect Miller's notion of Christian insight or instruction, we must note that Miller maintains his basic theory that Christian nurture must provide the empirical base for Christian instruction. If religious language or concepts are to convey any valid insight, they must refer to objective reality. The learners' access to the divine dimension of objective reality "is found in worship and in interpersonal relations."[120] The way one comes to "right beliefs" or valid knowledge about the existence of God remains the same throughout Miller's writings.[121] However, this consistency should not hide from us that Miller has a new understanding of the role of Christian instruction and of how discernment of God relates to commitment. The Church's task of "interpretation" of experience is related more closely to an ambiguous daily life and its moral challenges. And the interpretative function of religious "words" is no longer to simply label or "identify" intrinsically religious experiences, but to "evoke disclosures."

We will look at the relationship of Christian instruction to daily life and then at the function of religious words in turn, in order to appreciate the new educational challenges in leading to Christian insight.

Christian instruction and daily life in the world. In Christian Nurture, Miller is concerned from the outset that we recognize that the Church exists in the world and must maintain its relationship to it. After noting that children come to trust God "as they find him in the family and the Church," Miller suddenly broadens the horizon. He continues, "But the task of Christian education is broader than the Church or the family. Christians live in the world as disciples of Jesus Christ, and this is infinitely harder than expressing that discipleship in the Church."[122] While Miller has always referred to the Christian's role in society, it has never become as thematic in shaping the educational process as here. Miller now begins with the person as someone who lives in the Church and in the world. Christian education must more consciously deal with the learners' existence in the world, rather than just using some experiences "out there" to make a "Christian interpretation of life" possible. The role of Christian instruction is to help in the process of equipping the learners to serve God in the world. The primary focus of Christian instruction is the learner's need to discern God and his will in his own life and thereby be equipped to serve. This focus moves Miller further in the direction of finding educational processes that are suited to reach his religious-moral aim for Christian education than the focus on imparting a "Christian interpretation of life" has been. No matter how hard one tries to make the various doctrines or Christian truths, which comprise this "Christian interpretation," relevant to the lives of learners, the goal of the individual sessions becomes the learning of religious knowledge and not a changed way of responding to the challenges of one's life. Miller leaves behind the model of instruction which has shaped the format of _The Clue_ and _Biblical Theology_. The movement for nurture and instruction is no longer from experience to interpretation and knowledge. Rather the new movement of Christian education is "_from the world_--_to the Church_--_to the world_."[123]

The beginning of the educational process is _the world of the learner_. If the Christian educator is going to help or equip the learner, he must deal with the whole person. This person is "all of the things he has done, and much more inside himself that is hidden from himself and from others, except God."[124] The educator must therefore realize that the pupil in his class does not come from some vacuum or neutral ground waiting to absorb religious guidance. As Miller puts it:

> The pupil comes from the world, with whatever natural virtues and other insights into values he may have; he brings with him himself

> with his anxieties and problems and searchings; he comes out of an environment which has to a great extent formed him: home, school work, recreation. . . . He comes from the working classes, from a racially outcast group . . . from work in which he finds little meaning. He may have roots deep in a set of secular values; he may have roots in a rich family history; he may have no roots at all. He also comes as a unique individual, different in some way from everyone else in the congregation or in the class.[125]

The learner comes from the world of complex and ambiguous experiences to the Church. Here is the fellowship which enables him to search for the meaning of his existence and of all the myriad experiences which have made him what he is. The Church in its nurture and instruction aims to give the learner a perspective on his life so that he can see his experiences, value-judgments and activities in the light of God's gracious will for him. As Miller puts it:

> Whatever we have in our experience which we bring with us from the world into the community of the Holy Spirit is grist for the mill of Christian education, for our task is to see these experiences in terms of the will of God for us in our lives. Nothing is meaningless, although many things may seem so when they are contrary to what we believe to be God's will. The Gospel illuminates this life as well as transforms it.[126]

The key element in being able to view life from a Christian perspective and to see one's experiences in terms of God's will for us is the question of decision or commitment. Only those who decide to be loyal to Christ will be able to see daily life in the light of God's purposes.

What is the basis of commitment? In the past Miller has answered: nurture and right beliefs are the basis for commitment. Now he answers, "Decision rests on discernment, and again discernment is not so much knowledge as it is light breaking through."[127] The learner still receives whatever religious knowledge--and possibly knowledge about the world--he can absorb within the Church fellowship. However, Miller stresses that the learner's commitment is not based on these. Worship and Christian instruction must lead to moments when "the light dawns and we discern God's will in the midst of all the relativities of life."[128] Discernment relates not so much to some special experiences, but to the relativities of daily life. When we can see our daily life in a new light, namely as God's claim on us, "we are enabled freely to make a commitment, if we will."[129] As we shall see shortly, religious language becomes a key means for allowing "the light to dawn" and discernment to take place.

The learner who has found the meaning of his life through the educational processes of the Church knows "that as a member of the Church he must carry his insights back to the world."[130] His "insights" are not a series of "Christian" answers provided by the teacher to the problems he faces in his own life and in the perplexities of the world itself. Miller has maintained all along that "God speaks in different ways to different people at different times."[131] The Church only provides adequate information on given issues and helps the learners with discernment. It is the learner's ability to interpret life and information from a new, theological, perspective which allows him to "hear" what God is saying to him in his situation. The Church has not given answers, but has thrown a light on the issues which the learner faces in his world.

In looking back at this description of the Church's educational responsibility toward the learners and their world, it is striking how Miller's own language and thought-forms have changed from his earlier writings. Previously Miller had described--in rather objective and prosaic terms--how the teacher's task was limited to providing a contagious quality of Christian group life and to leading learners to right beliefs about the nature of reality. The movement which the learner had to make beyond those limits to reach a commitment was a "leap of faith," shrouded in mystery, beyond the teacher's control. Now Miller is willing to describe a part of that movement in poetic language as "the light breaking through." Beyond knowledge, and more important than it, in terms of a trust-relationship to God and in terms of moral responsibility to one's fellows, is discernment. As the light dawns, God appears, not primarily in the unambiguous experiences of being loved, but in the relativities of our daily life. He appears, not as an object to be observed and known, but much more "relationally" as someone who has a claim on us and "speaks" to us in the issues we face in daily life. The poetic language shows that it remains beyond the control of the teacher when discernment occurs, for he cannot force the light "to dawn." At the same time, the teacher has a major responsibility--and the means of religious language--to make this "dawning" a possibility. The teacher's communication becomes the indirect means by which God can "show himself" or "speak to" the learner in his own life. Miller is leaving behind the confines of his knowledge-model of Christian instruction. As his focus moves toward discernment and commitment, he designs an educational model in which coming to see God's presence is closely linked to the moral and relational challenge of seeing God's will for us in the relativities of daily life. And the key to facing the moral challenges of life is not religious or moral knowledge, but the learner's ability to find the meaning of his life by faith in God. Thus by relating Christian instruction to the daily world of the learner, Miller is beginning to find educational links between the moral and religious dimensions of life.

The nature and function of religious language. Beyond Christian nurture and "the language of relationships," religious language has a key role to play in enabling learners to come to discernment and commitment. This is a clear departure from Miller's earlier understanding of the role which words play in Christian education. Words no longer merely identify experiences thus becoming the basis for religious knowledge. Instead their role is "to evoke a special discernment of reality which will lead to total commitment [to God]."[132] Religious words are necessary so that God's presence in creation and in personal experience can be discerned in a way that leads to an involvement with this God. Rather than allowing people to observe and know God from a distance, religious words are now key agents in enabling learners to respond to God with trust and moral action. Clearly Miller's thought on the use of religious words in Christian education has crossed some "watershed." Miller identifies this "watershed" with his reading of Ian T. Ramsey's Religious Language.[133] This book and other writings by Ramsey bring an "existential note" to the center of Christian education. Concern for empirical reality, theological analysis, and an understanding of history are all important when approaching religious language and its nature and function. But the key issue is a discernment of reality and a relationship to it which is at the same time the beginning of a new self-understanding and commitment.[134]

How can religious language bring about a discernment of God's presence in a situation so that a commitment to him can follow? Miller indicates that according to Ramsey, religious language can only achieve these ends by taking on "certain odd uses." The language is "logically odd." Miller summarizes the meaning of the "oddness" as follows:

> It [i.e., religious language] is based on a discernment which is 'perceptual and more,' and therefore the situation becomes different, and he [i.e., Ramsey] describes this as 'the light dawning, the ice breaking, the penny dropping.' When this happens, we may yield to the reality behind the new insight with a total commitment.[135]

The logical impropriety of the language is necessary so that the hearer can discern something deeper than appears on the surface. While the language remains based in what can be perceived, it opens up a "new dimension."[136]

Because of this language which goes beyond the surface of events, beyond the perceptual, the learner can begin to discern God beneath the surface of his life.

When religious language because of its odd uses discloses the presence of God as a "new dimension" of daily life, the result is not so much knowledge as the creation of a new perspective on life. A theological paradigm or pattern forms in the learner which enables him to realign the data of his experiences and therefore to understand the meaning of the data more clearly.[137]

To broaden his view on how religious language functions to bring about discernment and commitment, Miller looks at the thought of Horace Bushnell, Francis Drinkwater, and Donald Evans as particularly germane. Bushnell has shown that religious words, while based on physical objects, operate on a "secondary level." This "secondary level" is the realm of allegory, analogy, and poetry. But each use of images or figures of speech carries with it some partial truth and partial falseness. Thus to portray religious reality many different images have to be used, so that the falsifications may cancel each other out.[138]

Drinkwater's major contribution lies in categorizing four kinds of language--scientific-difficult, scientific-simple, poetic-difficult, and poetic-simple--and then in identifying the poetic-simple as "the language of the heart," which already for Bushnell was the key to religious communication. Thus religious language, if it is to bring about discernment, cannot be the language of transmitting information or the language for creating complex systems of thought. It must be a simple poetic language--such as Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address"--which speaks to the human heart directly.

Donald Evans contributes to the understanding of how religious language functions to produce commitment in conjunction with discernment by describing the self-involving language of performatives. To look on life in a certain way, for example "as a game" or as a drama between God and humans, involves a "commissive element." The person involves himself in the way he looks on life when he says, "I look on my life as a game." By saying this, the person is committing himself to a certain attitude or approach to life. Religious language enables learners to look on their own life as a presence and challenge of God. The learner makes this way of looking on life--this "onlook"--his own by performative statements such as "I believe . . ." or "I look on God as. . . ."[139] Discernment of God's presence and commitment to him move very close together, once religious communicators recognize the nature of the self-involving language of performatives in relation to a person's way of looking on life.

What are the educational implications of this study of the role and nature of religious language? The educator is "concerned with developing or changing onlooks and with directions of action."[140] The tools for bringing this about is the kind of language which the various authors have described. With other words, Miller warns teachers from using any prosaic or straight-forward or literal language when speaking of God and his relationship to the world. They have to deal with images, poetry, drama, story, and other forms of communicating on two levels: the perceptual and what is beyond it.

"Story-telling becomes perhaps the most important of all forms of teaching," concludes Miller on the basis of his study on religious language.[141] The teacher is using a given story, not to teach Biblical history, etc., but to provide "a potential stimulus for evoking discernment."[142] To do this the teacher must search out stories which may help evoke a disclosure to learners at particular age-levels and in particular situations. He must further "teach the story as a story."[143] It is exactly as "story" that life can appear in a new light--which is the teacher's aim. Aside from stories, the teacher has available many other forms of discourse such as parables, poetry, and the other listed forms.

To make effective use of religious language--in the form of stories, parables, poetry, etc.--, the teacher must be aware of various "language gaps." There are developmental, cultural, and existential "gaps" which can block pupils from changing their "onlooks" and directions of action.

The developmental gap comes from the fact that children change in their use and appreciation of language--especially language of double meanings--as they grow older. Children between seven and eleven are literalists. They interpret the details of stories and poems in a literal manner, though they can distinguish between empirical fact and the fantasy mode. Only after the beginning of puberty "do we find the capacity to think in onlook language, especially in terms of analogy and abstract concepts."[144] Teachers therefore must watch that they do not wear certain images or metaphorical stories thin by premature and repeated use of them with children who are too young to appreciate the deeper meaning. They must also watch that they do not endorse the literalist interpretations of the young. Otherwise, these children will reject all biblical stories as fantasy, once they cannot accept the details on a factual level.

For Miller, "probably the single most frustrating factor in the communication of the gospel" is the social or cultural gap which separates us from the biblical world.[145] To use religious language effectively, the teacher must therefore first understand the biblical story in its original context and then find means of making a similar point in the context of the learner's experiences in a secular, modern society. The teacher may have to use a variety of new images or "models" for God. He may tell a biblical and a modern story in such a way that the mixture of images may evoke a disclosure. He may just tell a modern parallel and have the pupils discover the biblical story on their own.[146] By various means the teacher must try to bridge the cultural gap between the world-view of the Bible and of modern man, if religious words are to evoke a disclosure of God in the present world.

Beyond the developmental and cultural gap between biblical stories and their view of the world and present-day pupils, there is an existential gap. After listing the various language tools at the teacher's disposal, Miller remarks,

> But there is a gap between the biblical and secular onlooks, which cannot be crossed unless there is a disclosure such as Ramsey proposes. Then we can say, "We are as certain of God as we are of ourselves and other selves."[147]

The "biblical onlook" views life in the light of God's presence. The pupil can only come to this "onlook" by discernment and commitment. He must be able to involve himself in this way of looking on life by saying, "I believe"--not as an intellectual exercise, but as an assertion of trust. Thus Miller is pointing to a gap in understanding which comes from a person's basic commitment in life. A person's commitment to some center of loyalty expresses itself in his basic way of looking on life.

How does Miller propose that the teacher deal with the existential gap caused by the pupil's basic loyalties? Miller proposes an empirical solution to an existential problem. Self-involvement and a sharing of onlooks comes as the religious concepts are brought together with "empirical evidence" of God's presence.[148] Miller does not reflect on the phenomenon, which he described earlier, that a person's present "onlook" determines what data will be seen, how it is ordered, and what interpretation will be given to the data of experiences. The real educational problem in religious communication therefore remains unresolved, namely: How can a person who sees life in terms of his "onlook" come to see the same experiences in a "new light" as the gift and challenge of a gracious God?

In looking back at the new development in Miller's view of Christian instruction which began with Christian Nurture and the Church, we can see that Miller is beginning to focus on the lives of the learners in the world as central to the curriculum. To affect how the learners see this life and how they respond to its moral challenges, the educators must use the language of words in such a way that one's daily experiences are seen in a new light. Religious language thus does not deal with information and knowledge, but rather with discernment and commitment. Religious language mediates God's presence in creation and in the Church fellowship in such a way that the pupil can relate to God in trust and total commitment.

Miller's view of Christian nurture has remained constant throughout his writings. Miller's view of Christian instruction, i.e., of those educational processes which lead to insight, has gone through a major shift, once Miller discovered the contribution of linguistic philosophy, and particularly of Ian T. Ramsey, to the task of Christian communication. However, has even this later development in Miller's understanding of the educational processes necessary for leading people to a commitment to God been able to meet Miller's dual relational aims for Christian education? Has Miller found educational means for affecting the learners' religious and moral relationships at the same time? In other words, does Miller's educational theory reflect that Christian communication is "indirect communication," because it deals with the intersection of these two relationships: to God and to the neighbor?

We now turn to consider these questions in terms of a summary evaluation and critique of Miller's theory of Christian education.

4. Assessing Miller's Attempt at Overcoming Direct Communication

By bringing theology to bear on describing the task and methods of Christian education, Miller hopes to overcome theoretical and practical inadequacies in prevalent models. Teaching religious or moral knowledge, bringing about the social adjustment of pupils to a given group, or leading learners to an integration centered in some knowable ideal--these all are theologically inadequate descriptions of the task of Christian education. In the language of my thesis, all these models see the function and nature of Christian education as being "direct communication." They are "direct," because they do not make the pupils independently active in responding to their own particular situations in daily life. Knowledge can be acquired independent of the person's daily practice. One can accommodate oneself to the action-patterns of a group by social adjustment without being freed to find one's own responses to novel situations. If one's integration is in terms of some ideal, rather than a living Creator, one is not equipped to respond self-actively to the novel, unpredictable, creative and ambiguous elements of human life. One will tend to make life conform to the ideal or static idea.

What clue does a theological perspective give Miller to help him overcome the impasses of "direct communication"? Theology is a description of human relationships to God and to their fellows. Theology shows how there is a religious element to a person's behavior and ethics, namely, the nature of his relationship with God. A person's center of integration, his basic loyalties, express themselves in one's responses to one's fellows. Thus the task of Christian education is to bring the pupils to a right relationship with God and their fellows. Theology leads Miller to attempt to overcome the impasses of direct communication by focusing, not on transmitting knowledge, ideals or specific action patterns, but on affecting relationships. The battleground of religious and moral living is in these relationships. The teacher cannot force the pupils to relate in a certain way. They cannot control the outcome. All they can do is to be agents or mediators--by nurture and instruction for insight--of relationships into which the learners must enter on their own. What happens within the learners' relationships to a living God and to actual humans in their daily life is also beyond the teacher's control, for a relationship is a living thing and not a dead fact or ideal. The teacher does not offer prescriptions for action, but trusts that the pupil's commitment to the living God will help him discern God's will in particular situations. Commitment to God is the source of independent moral activity in daily life. Thus, by putting a pupil's religious and moral relationships at the center of Christian education, Miller is clearly moving toward a model of "indirect communication."

Providing Christian nurture in the family and fellowship of the Church, and leading pupils to Christian insight into their experienced relationships are the two educational means by which Miller hopes that the relational task of Christian education can be accomplished. How are we to evaluate Miller's design of educational processes? Do they allow Miller to reach his moral and religious aims for Christian education? Is Christian nurture and insight, in Miller's description, "indirect communication"?

In brief, my evaluation is that Miller is gradually uncovering some educational processes that can affect a pupil's relationship to God in such a way that it will make him independently active in discerning and doing God's will in the human interactions of daily life. However, his epistemology blocks Miller from fully exploring the existential and moral issues involved in affecting someone's basic,--i.e., "religious"--commitments, loyalties, or centers of integration and meaning. Miller's epistemology is derived from the natural sciences which view the world "objectively"--from a distance. The result of using this view in understanding life, humans, the world is objective knowledge. The aims of Christian education can, however, only be met, if the teacher and pupils come to a relational understanding of God (which involves trust, commitment and moral action), rather than having correct religious information and knowledge. The "objective" epistemology which Miller uses to guide many of his educational processes is thus at odds with his relational aims.

To support this evaluation, I will now summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the processes of nurture and of insight in terms of their ability to affect a pupil's religious relationship to some center of integration in such a way that the pupil is freed to moral self-activity in his daily life.

Christian nurture. How does Miller's notion of Christian nurture help or hinder learners in coming to a right relationship with God and their fellows?

On the positive side, the emphasis on a nurturing process as a basis for enabling Christian insight to occur is clearly moving Christian education away from a preoccupation with the transmission of information and religious knowledge. A person's religious integration does not come primarily from his idea of God. It comes from his relationship to the living

God who is the central element in the Christian's environment. The role of Christian nurture is therefore to be both the human mediation of God to the learner and the witness to God as standing behind human actions.

As the concrete mediation of the God whom no one has seen, Christian nurture lets God's creative and redemptive will shape the life and growth of the learner. By means of human relationships the child or pupil is confronted with God's creation as an ongoing activity, with God's natural and moral order for life, with God's provision for his growth and development and with God's love and forgiveness. God's creative and redemptive will thus becomes the central element in the learner's environment--whether he is aware of it or not.

Christian nurture is also an intentional witness to God as the one who stands behind these human actions and creations. This witness is explicit in such actions as saying grace at meals and in participating in corporate worship. The witness is present, less overtly, in the way the parents or other significant adults order the world of the child and in how they treat the child. In these actions of providing order and a sense of acceptance, they are beginning to give a theological interpretation of life. They are beginning to answer everyman's religious questions about the source and meaning of the world and of one's own life. They are pointing beyond themselves to God as the center of this world and of a meaningful life. Actions speak louder--and earlier--than words, since they express one's operative beliefs. The later verbal witness to God is, therefore, based on the language of relationships and its active witness.

In sum: Christian nurture can help in leading learners to a right relationship with God and fellows insofar as it mediates God to people and interprets, by means of actions, life from a theological perspective. Nurture potentially links the religious with the moral relationships of a person, since it interprets the moral order of life as coming from God. Relating to God therefore would mean accepting his moral order.

The negative side of Miller's development of the role of Christian nurture in Christian education comes from linking it to his experience-interpretation epistemology. Nurture is now used to provide certain experiences which can be the empirical base for valid religious knowledge. Before a person relates to God by a commitment of trust and by independent moral action, he is supposed to know God non-relationally as an existing object. Rather than being encouraged to relate in trust and obedience to the hidden God who is continually shaping and addressing him in natural, social, political and familial orders, the learner is asked to discover religious truths by finding "evidences" of God's existence in the quality of certain interpersonal experiences. Miller does not continue to develop Christian nurture in the relational mode of presenting God's concrete address--by means of mediation and witness-which demands a response. He develops it in the non-relational mode of providing "evidences" of God's reality which are to be observed and known. The learner's religious and moral responses to the challenges and questions of daily life are held in suspension until some later time when "commitment" may follow right beliefs.

Where can learners find an empirical access to the reality of God? The answer is: in the fellowship of the Church (which includes as a cell of the Church the Christian family). God can be seen here more clearly than in the rest of nature and society, because of the "quality" of the fellowship. This "quality" comes from "the power of the personal," which enables people to accept and forgive others. In the experience of being accepted, the learner has an experiential access to the divine element in human life.

As a result of this view of the role of the Christian fellowship in providing an experiential access to God, a prime nurturing task of teachers becomes to turn classes into small groups where one accepts one another. Or again, the task is to develop habits of loyalty to the Church in the learners. How does this kind of nurture enable the learners to discern and respond to God's will in their own particular situations in a "secular society"? There is no intrinsic connection between feeling accepted in a certain group and being equipped to see God's moral will in one's relationships to one's fellows who may reject or ignore one. Conformity to the group or the patterns of a given congregation are a more likely outcome of this nurture, than independent moral activity in the complex relations of daily life. Rather than trying to discern God's will in these complex relations--political, economic, familial--and finding one's own response, one will tend to "sit in judgment" on the ambiguous or impersonal nature of many of these relations. The "ideal experience" which one had in the close Christian fellowship becomes the moral norm for judging life.[149]

In summary: whenever Miller develops the notion of Christian nurture in the direction of providing an observable or experiential access to the reality of God, he is leaving behind "indirect" or relational communication. God becomes known passively, independent of his moral claim on the person. And a person's response to life is not a matter of discernment and self-activity, but one of using an ideal experience as the moral norm for life's experiences. Miller's epistemology is thus inadvertently pushing his notion of nurture much closer to a form of idealism such as Coe's, than he would like. Coe's socio-economic idealism is simply being replaced by a narrower, interpersonal idealism. As soon as one moves out of the relational mode when dealing with God and humans into an objective mode of trying to identify some ideal or pattern of life as divine, then one moves toward idealism and direct communication.

Thus we see that Miller's way of developing the role and nature of Christian nurture within the whole scheme of Christian education can be either a help or a hindrance to his aim of leading learners to a right relationship with God and their fellows depending on whether he approaches nurture from a relational or objective mode.

Christian insight. We noted the marked shift in Miller's view on the role and nature of instruction for the sake of leading to Christian insight. In his early writings, Miller's theory of knowledge was the major influence on the processes of instruction. Christian instruction served to provide valid or relevant religious and moral knowledge. The relational issues of the learner's commitment to God and his moral response to life were assumed to be beyond the teacher's control. The gap between the objective knowledge of God and a relational understanding was to be crossed by a "leap of faith." In his later writings, Miller's reading of Ian T. Ramsey's ideas on the role and nature of religious language was the major influence on the processes of instruction. Christian instruction now focused on the relational issues of discernment and commitment. Religious knowledge and information were seen as quite secondary to the learner's ability to discern God's presence and God's claim on him in his own daily situations. Seeing life in a new light became the key to finding new directions for one's moral actions. Thus Miller clearly moved from a non-relational to a relational mode of instruction.

Miller's early phase of Christian instruction was unable to decisively affect a learner's moral and religious relationships, because it was a process for acquiring experiential knowledge. The learners were taught theology, rather than instructed in the art of living in relationship with God and fellows. They were guided to reflect on their experiences and then to identify the experiences by means of religious words or concepts.

Miller does not reflect on the challenge to one's center of integration that comes from using theological "names" for one's experiences. Thus he does not link the task of interpreting one's experiences theologically with the task of re-interpreting one's self-understanding. That a person's basic loyalties are at stake when he is to see God as standing behind the events of life does not become an issue, because Miller assumes that God's reality can be observed and known in the same way as one comes to know any object. In other words, Miller's application of his empirical theory of knowledge to the process by which one comes to know God screens him from having to deal with the existential problems of coming to a theological view of life. From his own theological or Christian perspective, Miller has diagnosed the basic human problem as being sin, i.e., a broken relationship with God. In his theological writings Miller has noted that sin can create alternate loyalties, a distorted view of God, a false assessment of one's own worth, and a protective self-system which shields one from the challenge of relating to others.[150] Yet these theological insights are not reflected in the educational process of Miller's early phase, when he deals with how one comes to know God. Nowhere does he guide teachers to consider that when a learner is asked to reflect on certain experiences and come to identify them with theological words, his reflection can be impaired or distorted by his distrust of the very "object" he is to observe. Thus the educational process for learning correct religious knowledge ignores the central relational issue of coming to a right relationship with

God, namely, the learner's broken relationship.

While Miller always has maintained that faith leads to moral action and is the key to Christian behavior--rather than some moral standards or ideals--, he does not reflect adequately on the moral dimension of coming to know God. The basis of the learner's reflection when he comes to religious insight, according to the early phase, is not his experience of being related to others in an ambiguous world and of having to constantly make decisions and act. Rather the learner is guided to look at those experiences in his personal life and in society where there are direct "evidences" of God at work. The result of the reflection is not a new sense of moral responsibility, but the acquisition of right beliefs.

Thus Miller's early phase of Christian instruction is direct communication for it leads to a knowledge of God that leaves a person's present religious and moral relationships unaltered--except if some "leap of faith" occurs. But this is beyond the purview of the educational process.

In his later writings, Miller moves toward a relational mode of dealing with Christian insight. As a result, he was better able to deal with the moral dimension of coming to insight into God's presence in daily life--although the moral dimension of religious understanding was left in an undeveloped state. The basic framework for a Christian instruction that deals with a person's need to decide and respond in daily life is, however, there. The experience-reflection-knowledge model of the early phase is replaced with "from the world--to the Church--to the world." The learner's daily world and decisions is the beginning and end of the process. The role of the Church is to provide a "new perspective" on this life. It is the new way of seeing life, once "the light dawns," that changes one's actions. The new religious perspective allows the learner to become independently active in discerning, and responding to, God's will in his particular situation.

Miller's new understanding that religious words are not primarily concepts or labels for identifying certain experiences, but are means which allow the learners to "see" or "hear" God in their daily experiences, enables him to use religious language so as to affect a learner's basic commitments or his "onlook" on life. Religious language provides the learner with the possibility of relating to God in trust and action by showing his daily life in the new light of being the presence of a living God. One comes to "see" life in this light as one yields to the invisible reality which the religious words convey. To come to know God therefore implies that one comes to a new basic commitment and to a new way of seeing, and responding to, one's world. The "existential note" is clearly at the center of Christian instruction. The emphasis is on the self-involvement of the learner so that he can say "I believe . . ." as an expression of commitment and of acceptance of a theological "onlook."

The greatest weakness in Miller's new model of Christian instruction shows itself in how he deals with changing the learner's perspective or "onlook" from a secular to a biblical one. The key difference between the secular and biblical way of "looking on life" is not the cultural difference between two times, but the difference between seeing life in terms of God's presence or non-theistically. To allow a change of "onlooks" to occur, Miller therefore proposed that the learner must first of all have access to those experiences in which God is observable beneath the surface. The key issue for Miller is once again "evidence"--in the objective mode--rather than a person's distrust of God or his choice of alternate centers of loyalty and commitment. Miller does not reflect on the possibility that sin creates its own "onlook" or paradigm by which any experiences--even so-called "redemptive" ones--will be interpreted. Miller thus turns to a model of direct communication--i.e., providing experiential knowledge of God--exactly at the point where the indirect nature of religious communication becomes most necessary and apparent. The theological "onlook" can only become a possibility for the learner as educational means are found to expose and shatter the "onlook"--and paradigm for ordering experiences--which narrow or ego-centric loyalties create.

I conclude: Miller has uncovered educational aims and processes which begin to express the indirect nature of Christian communication. However, his educational theory is not consistently "indirect" or "relational" communication, because of his desire to show that religious truths are expressions of objective reality and can therefore be known and validated by empirical methods.

CHAPTER VI

AN OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to give a basic outline or skeleton of a model of Christian education which is committed to indirection as the true nature of Christian communication. To provide this outline, we will primarily be pulling together and ordering the central insights we have gained in both the theological and educational sections of this thesis. I will elaborate on these insights only enough to let the educational tasks appear. This chapter will thus be more prescriptive than descriptive. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe in detail a full model of Christian education. I am merely prescribing the basic direction we must pursue as Christian educators, if we believe that Christian education is necessarily and always wedded to indirect communication.

First, I will summarize six interrelated foundational issues which must guide the development of an adequate theory of Christian education. The educational foundations are based on the theological roots of indirect communication. These roots are: 1) created reality as the only realm of divine-human dialogue, 2) the universal actuality of sin as a human monologue that cannot hear God's address in the challenges of daily life, and 3) the dialectical function of God's recreative grace which must first silence the human monologue before dialogue with God in daily life can be established. These three roots for indirect communication were developed in the first three chapters.

Secondly, I will summarize our findings about educational aims which we made in our study of Coe and Miller. How do we capitalize on the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of Coe's and Miller's aims? Since both Coe and Miller do not adequately deal with the second root of indirect communication (viz., "sin"), our statement of an adequate aim must move beyond theirs. If sin is a universal problem, then Coe's "growth of the young" must become "dramatic growth"; and Miller's "right relationship with God and fellows" must be brought about by "human transformations."

Thirdly, I will summarize our findings about those educational processes which are truly in the realm of indirection. Insofar as Coe and Miller have uncovered educational methods which allow the learner's daily reality to affect his religion and morality, we will only have to correlate their insights. But we must move beyond Coe and Miller, since neither of them describes educational processes that reflect the dialectic of grace (i.e., the third theological root of indirect communication). Thus Coe's processes of "deliberate choosing" of values must be accompanied by a process that reverses the learner's basic value or desire from personal control of life to trust in an uncontrollable God. And Miller's processes of Christian insight by means of "experience and interpretation" or of "the odd functioning of religious language" must be corrected to bring about a reversal of perspectives. We can only interpret the data of our experiences theocentrically, when our secure and familiar egocentric view is torn apart. We can only interpret life from a biblical perspective, when we let ourselves be reinterpreted.

1. Six Foundational Issues

1) The aims and processes of Christian education must be based on

the actual dynamics of human living. If we take the notion of life as God's ongoing creation seriously, we must make historical living, and not an idea or ideal of life, the beginning and end of any deliberate Christian education. Christian education must lead into life with all its decisions, challenges, ambiguities and sudden twists. It must lead people out of the safety of the grandstand, of the observer and connoisseur seats, into the arena of action, involvement, conflict, personal responsibility. Life is not a spectator sport. God does not appear to observers and spectators. He can only be "seen" by the participants who close their objective eyes. Once the spectator's eyes are closed, God faces us in all the finite challenges of daily living. We become fully human as we keep on responding to the demands of living amongst people guided by trust in the Creator.

The dynamics of human living may not be identified with the immanent principles by which mind, body, and soul develop and unfold. Coe made this mistake. In spite of his concern for the social nature and social interrelatedness of humans, he focused primarily on the functions of the individual person's mind. It is in the mind of individuals that Coe sought to discover both the moral and the religious dimension of life. The mind's development is "moral," since it searches after discriminate values. The mind's unfolding is "religious," since valuing is guided by God, the choice within our choices.

Luther has pointed out that the distinctive features of the human creature can only come into view when one regards him within the network of relationships which make him who he is, which are a real part of him. The dynamics of human life in the world include a person's relationship to the world and to other people as "body and mind," as well as his relationship to some god (some center of worth and meaning) as "spirit." The acknowledgement of a social and a spiritual dynamic in human life leads to our next prescription.

2) An adequate theory of Christian education must explore both the social/moral and the religious/spiritual dimensions of human living. To fully understand the dynamics of human living, educational theorists must explore the nature of humans as non-autonomous, yet responsible beings. The human is embedded in natural and social relationships which form a part of his reality. He is not only embedded in a network of relationships, but also able to respond on his own. The individual can only fulfill his various social roles and relationships--i.e., become fully human--if he is free to be responsive to the tasks and people which social living confronts him with. The social reality of other people who are related to us through various roles and relationships and who depend on our ability to be responsive to them and their needs is the root of the moral dimension of human life.

A second distinctive aspect of the human creature is his search for meaning. The human, as Luther has shown, must put his trust into something or someone to give his life meaning and worth. Miller speaks of the human needing a center of integration. Everyone is therefore "religious" to the extent that everyone "has a god" on whom he relies for meaning and worth. Everyone has some basic loyalties or commitments which guide his life.

Because a person is more than the natural endowments of body, mind, and psyche, educators have to study more than the physical, cognitive and emotional development of people. They must study moral interactions or social relatedness as well as the dynamics of the religious quest for meaning and the religious activity of commitment to something or someone.

3) How the religious and the moral dimensions of life are inter-

related must be a central issue for educational theorists. Beyond recognizing and studying the religious and moral aspects of life, we must consider how the one dimension affects the other. How does a person's religion affect his morality?

By fusing the realm of religion and morality, Coe was not able to notice how a person's basic loyalties or basic commitments can block a person from taking the risk of choosing social over egoistic purposes and values. His whole scheme of moral development by means of experiments in "discriminate choosing" is based on his idealistic hope that people will in fact choose the better, the social, and the harder way over against the lesser, more self-centered, and conventional way of life. Rather than relying on such a noble hope, we as today's educators must discover how a person's religion influences this basic choice of "ways."

Miller has indicated that faith in God is the key to a non-egocentric "way of life" or morality. He has stressed that a person's actions are guided by his deepest convictions. Therefore the behavior of learners can best be changed by focusing on their relationship with God and by restoring it to a "right relationship." By using an interpersonal model for understanding how broken relationships are restored on the human level and then transferring this model to deal with relationships on the religious level, Miller does not deal with the process that is necessary to change basic loyalties, commitments or centers of meaning. This is so, because he has not explored the relation of alternative religious view to moral action far enough.

Luther leads us a step further when he uncovers the fact that a person's basic or "religious" commitments create a certain view of life. One's "god" becomes the hermeneutic key for interpreting life's challenges.

And the way one sees life determines the way in which we respond to it. Our morality, that is, our way of responding to life, is based in our "religion," that is, our way of looking at life. Therefore if we want to affect a person's morality, we must learn to change his perspective on life. A "broken relationship" with God is therefore more than feeling rejected or unaccepted. The broken relationship implies that the learner has developed an alternate relationship, namely to a different "god" or object of trust. To bring learners to a "right relationship" with God, therefore implies a process that will _break_ the relationship to the substitute for the living God.

4) _Chrisitan educators must learn to make a functional distinction between true and false religion_. Once we recognize that our religion is the basis of our morality, we must ask ourselves what type of religious perspective is necessary for a way of living that fulfills its social roles, takes risks on behalf of others, and is willing to prefer the hard over the conventional way. If we agree with Miller that faith in God is the key to a truly human morality, we must ask ourselves why this is so. Why is mere social adjustment to the values and patterns of a group an inadequate integration, i.e., operative religion? Why must the living God rather than some ideal be the object of a person's devotion and loyalty? Are there functional reasons why certain types of basic loyalties block people from preferring social over egoistic purposes and values? Can we indeed distinguish between true and false religion by looking at the effects certain _types_ of religious commitments have on people's lives?

Because of his evolutionary-developmental view of the human mind and its religious function, Coe does not ask these questions. He does not try to distinguish between true and false religion. Rather he distinguishes religions in terms of un-developed and developed. He judges a religion's "maturity" on the basis of their espousal of his social ideal. Miller does begin to distinguish between different types of loyalties or varying methods of personal integration. He does claim that one can be only fully human and responsive to the novel, the unpredictable, the creative in life, if the living God is the center of one's integration. However, he does not devote his time to tracing the phenomenon of inadequate types of integration. He does not show the functional consequences--personally or socially--of false loyalties.

Again Luther's thought can help us with this issue. He distinguishes between two basic types of religions on the basis of their function in enabling or blocking a person to be free and responsible in daily life. He is not satisfied with merely claiming that God must be our "object" of trust (that is, the one who is the "subject of our actions"). He tries to show why this is so in moral terms. Absolute trust in the God who addresses us in the relational demands of life is "true religion," since it frees us from being preoccupied with ourselves, with our worth, with creating our own "meaning" in life. It frees us to attend to the needs of "the neighbor" in our various callings. It frees us to act on our own: creatively and willing to take personal responsibility. Faith in God as this type of freeing agent "teaches" us what to do in the changing tasks and situations of social living. No ideal or prescription for life could ever make us responsive to every situation as God's address to us.

In contrast, "false religion" is characterized by our devotion to some ideal, personal goal or self-image, or even to some idea of the kingdom of God. In functional terms, this devotion to an idea of life, rather than to God, is "false" religion, because it hinders us from being free to attend to the needs of others and free to act on our own. We will be preoccupied with living up to the ideal standard to which we devote ourselves. This ideal or self-image will be a hard task-master that rules our conscience. It will accuse us, if we fall short of the ideal. And we always fall short. Our own self-development, rather than the neighbor, thus becomes the focus of our concern.

The functional distinction between true and false religion helps us as Christian educators to be alert to the fact that false religion can come in a secular and a very churchly dress. We discover that the "religion" of the Me-generation and of people who have internalized many of the church's do's and dont's as "the will of God" have many structural and functional similarities. In both cases the freedom to respond to other's needs can be exchanged with a preoccupation with one's self-development. Beyond that, the functional distinction between true and false religion helps us to uncover the basic reason why so many of our educational processes do not accomplish what we hope for. We find that the real enemy of Christian education is not the absence of religion or the presence of a secular culture, but the prevalence of "false religion" in Church and Society.

5) Christian educators must attend to the task of devising means to break the hold which "false religion" or "sin" has on people. A person is never neutral over against God. Either he lives by "true religion," which alone "knows" God. Or he lives by "false religion," which ultimately sets up the human self as an idol. In terms of his morality, he therefore either focuses on the task at hand and on the neighbors who are affected by the task. Or, in "false religion," he focuses his concern on keeping a body of rules or on his self-development. The Christian educator is thrown into the arena of this religious and moral "Either-Or." When edu-

cating the body, the mind, or the emotions, nurturing growth and development become the central means of educators. When dealing with the human spirit, bringing about "dramatic growth" or "human transformation" is the central challenge. The educator cannot merely nurture the human spirit so that faith gradually develops. The question immediately arises, What kind of faith? Faith in an ideal, a person, a self-image, or faith as absolute trust in an ungraspable God? Spiritual growth is "dramatic." True and false religion are the protagonists vying for the spirit's devotion and trust. False religion's way of interpreting and responding to life must be reversed for spiritual growth to occur. The spirit only keeps on growing, when in each new situation the security of false religion is left behind. The religious perspective of sin, of egocentricity, is constantly battling with the religious perspective of true faith, of theocentricity. The human spirit grows through an ongoing conflict of interpretations.

Coe does not help us to break the hold false religion has on a person's way of looking at life and way of responding to society, since he did not recognize that the dimension of "spirit" is different from "mind." Coe deals with development: the development of the mind. At best, he deals with arrested development. He proposes to overcome this blockage by the same means that help the immature minds to grow towards maturity in choosing.

Miller claims that overcoming sin, or a broken relationship with God, is a central task for Christian education. However, since he did not identify sin as an alternate religion, as devotion to an other god, he does not show us how we can break its hold over people. Miller trusts that even the sinner can observe that God must be real, when he looks at the quality of life which the Christian Church or Christian family has (or, at least:

is supposed to have). He also believes that the sinner is then free to turn around from the way of sin to receive God's grace, the power of redemption. He receives God's redeeming forgiveness after he has turned on his own!

Again Luther points us to where our educational task lies, when he states that the dialectic of grace is needed to kill the presumptions of false religion and to bring to life true religion. He alerts us thereby to the educational significance of what is being discussed in the research into the parables' mode of communication.[1] Trust in the hidden God which expresses itself in a new way of acting comes about by a change of perspectives. We will expand on this in our section on the necessary educational process.

6) Christian educators must discover the distinctiveness of spiritual communication. Neither the content of communication (such as religious or moral knowledge), nor the means of communication (such as "the language of relationships" or verbal language), nor the form of communication (such as metaphorical language or parables) can guarantee that spiritual communication is taking place. Communication becomes spiritual when it addresses the human heart or spirit, challenging it to trust and obey God. With other words, spiritual communication occurs when a person's basic perspective, basic way of finding worth and meaning in life, is being addressed and challenged. The mystique that surrounded "the language of relationships" from the 1950's onward and that is now surrounding "parables" seems to imply that there is an almost magical solution to the problem of communicating God's presence to people. We must dispel these mystiques by considering what particular function Christian communication is to perform, namely to offer a new hermeneutic key to interpreting daily

life, and a hidden key at that.

While the event of changing a human heart is a work of the Holy Spirit, and thus beyond the control of human techniques, we as Christian educators must nevertheless uncover the means and processes which can be the vehicles of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit works through created, creaturely means to bring about a new act of creation, i.e., a person who has died to self-centredness and is brought to life as a creature who trusts his Creator. In Luther's language, the two basic means of God's Spirit are called "creation" and "the Word," or "the natural law" (i.e., the moral imperative to serve our neighbors that is written into social life) and "promise" (i.e., the announcement that the hidden God of creation deals with us by the logic of grace, not performance). The educational challenge is to make "spiritual use" of the moral imperative that is present in the life of everyone we try to educate and of the promise of grace, which is beyond anyone's understanding. We use these God-given means spiritually, when we help the demands of social living to shatter the illusion of self-righteousness, to disturb the smug, to question unassailable knowledge about life or God. And we use the promise of grace spiritually, when we allow people to see that a new context for living, a new logic for acting is possible, if they let go of their presumptions and defenses. We must expand on this educational process below. At present it is sufficient that we recognize that an educational intervention is only "spiritual" insofar as it addresses more than the mind or one's feelings, namely, the preoccupied human spirit.

I contend that if we pursue these six foundational issues along the lines indicated, our theory of Christian education will be an educational appropriation of the notion of indirect communication. The education we will develop will be in the realm of indirection throughout, since we begin and end with the gift and challenge of living finite, historical lives today. At no point do we presume to transcend the realm of the creaturely for some direct glimpse of God or of some timeless ideals. At best, we provide a transcendent, uncontrollable context for viewing historical life. We can, however, never grasp or objectify God as our transcendent frame of reference. We can only "have" this context, this frame, as we live by it. The education will also be indirect communication, since it acknowledges the alternate, controllable view of life which sin creates. Finally, it will be an indirect communication of God's presence, since it will deal with the spiritual task of bringing about a reversal of perspectives by means of the dialectic of grace.

2. The Aim: An Incarnate Faith

The central aim of Christian education is to open up the possibility of faith to persons. Faith in the Creator is at the heart of the indirect divine-human dialogue. Faith as unconditional trust in a gracious God defines the nature of the "right relationship to God" which Miller is aiming at. Miller seeks to explain the relationship between humans and God by using the model of the human relationship of love. But this model has its definite limits when applied to the relationship of humans to God. Love on the human level is often marked by an identifiable emotion which tells you that you are indeed in love. And love is characterized by an immediate contact with the beloved which nurtures the love-relationship. How does one love an invisible God? How does one love someone whose presence for us is always a veiling of his essence, rather than an unveiling--i.e., a presence clothed in finite, creaturely realities? Love to such a "being" (to the source of being) is not one of seeing or feeling, but one of trusting "blindly," one of faith. Faith acknowledges and preserves the creaturely and epistemological gap between humans and God without trying to overcome it. Faith is satisfied with responding to the natural and social realities of the realm of "creation" as the presence and address of God.

Faith as the source of continual responses to creation as God's address is a contrasting aim to Coe's "devotion to the democracy of God." Coe seeks to gradually bring about a devotion to a knowable social _ideal_. When we aim at faith, we are seeking to lead people to an ongoing openness to the actual, ambiguous realities, tasks, and people of daily life. Faith is devotion to a God whose will can never be objectified and known in its essence--as idea or ideal. Devotion to an ideal lets us transcend the actual to gain a divine vantage-point for looking at the world. Faith ties us irrevocably to the realm of creation. God is present for us in the created as his "faces," not in an idea of life and society.

Faith as an activity of the human spirit is a life-long process of learning to dare to interpret the challenges of life from within the context of a God-given, unmerited love of humans. Faith is the process of coming to see the ordinary, including suffering and death, in the unfamiliar context of a God who has promised to be gracious, to mean us well in whatever we go through. We cannot "have" faith like a possession, like some intrinsic quality of the soul. Faith is always active, always tempted to use the familiar context, always struggling to see life as God's creation against one's own feelings, against the accusations of one's conscience, or against one's own evaluations of what makes life "good on our own terms." Sallie McFague in _Speaking in Parables_ points to faith as a process, when she says, "Christian belief must always be a process of coming to belief--like a story--through the ordinary details of historical life. . . ."[2]

Because of sin as an alternate way of interpreting life to that of faith (an alternative which is constantly present and which all of us actually use over and over again), the growth of the spirit in the process of coming to believe must be a "dramatic growth," to use another one of Sallie McFague's images.[3] We constantly find ourselves trying to make life "good on our own terms," that is, we are using our own ideas as the hermeneutic key for interpreting life, not God whom we profess to worship. Or as Coe has remarked, we constantly idolize yesterday's thought and therefore are not open to the actualities and challenges of today. The human spirit is making human ideas or activities its source of meaning and worth. If the human spirit is to "grow," if the process of coming to belief is to continue, a "drama" must occur.

The drama is one of human transformation. The transformation is not an act of emancipating oneself from sin's view by oneself. Rather it is an act of liberation coming from outside of the meaning-system which the self creates in distrust. The task of Christian education is therefore to be an agent of liberation, so that dramatic growth may occur. If the aim of education is faith, then this aim implies that we seek to shatter the hold egocentric perspectives keep on gaining over people. Christian education interferes with people's meaning-systems to enable spiritual growth to occur. In contrast to those who educate and nurture the body and the mind, educators of the human spirit do not merely help some innate capacities to unfold. They both introduce a "word," a new possibility, to the human spirit, and they guide its growth through ongoing reversals of perspectives. The limits of Coe's notion of "growth of the young toward . . . devotion to the democracy of God" are apparent. Growth for him is primarily a development and unfolding of the innate valuational powers of the mind.

Faith itself, as we just noted, ties us intimately to the realm of creation, of daily living. The task of liberating people from the comfortable and egocentric perspectives aims at leading people back to responding to daily life. It seeks to reverse their escape from freedom and responsibility. It seeks to lead people from ideas about life back to living. Therefore, the aim of Christian education is always an incarnate faith. Faith is incarnate in the daily responses to the tasks and complexities of living in a society of people. To this extent Coe is right when he says that one cannot get right with God first and then become socially minded afterward. The two processes are fused. To trust God means that one interprets the imperative to serve one's neighbor in one's vocations and relationships as his well-meaning address. Only as one acts on it in daily life does one "have" the perspective of faith.

3. The Process: a Dialectic of Grace

a. The theological dynamics

The means of grace. How does an incarnate faith happen? How does a person learn to dare to look at his life within the hidden context of God's grace? God's offer of grace is itself the source of human faith. But what are the means of God by which this grace reaches people? Using Luther's shorthand, we can describe God's means of grace as "creation" and "Promise" (or "the Word"). Both "creation" and "the Promise" must work together to bring us into dialogue with the gracious Creator. "Creation" and "Promise" as interrelated parts correspond closely to the two elements that biblical scholars are finding in parables. The parables can communicate the context of unmerited love by describing the realities of every day life. They give an unexpected twist to the ordinary, so that it appears in a new light. The strange turns and twists that the everyday realism of the parables undergo show how "the logic of grace" affects daily actions. "Everyday realism" and the "distorting" "hidden context" are the two elements which make parables work as a means of making a life of faith possible for the hearers.[4] They can begin to look at their own life in the strange light of grace, rather than in the familiar light of having to prove oneself by one's actions and of having to control and secure life.

What clues do these insights of Luther and of contemporary biblical scholars give to Christian educators? How can we reach our aim of making faith possible? We must make educational use of God's means of grace. We must lead people to where God will address them. The "tools of our trade" become, on the one hand, representations of daily reality and, on the other, pointers to the hidden context. We must lead people to hear the "address" of daily life and then help them to interpret this "address" within the context of God's gift of a worth to humans which does not have to be earned. The hidden context makes no sense except in relation to the address of daily life to which the individual must somehow respond.

I am describing the "tools of our trade" in terms of functions we must perform rather than in terms of specific techniques. Only when we recognize what must occur in an individual for him to see, and respond to, life as God's address, can we overcome the temptation of seeing "social experiemtns" or "the language of relationships" or "religious language" as a magical solution to our educational problems. For example, "social experiments" such as Coe proposes can be very helpful when we try to help learners discern social reality with the natural law of love that is written into it. However, the experiments by themselves do not help learners to look at the demand to serve their fellows in the context of grace. They could easily interpret the demands of social living as a call to works-righteousness, i.e., a call to make themselves worthwhile humans by trying to serve their fellows. The result would be a preoccupation with their own self-development and thus an enlightened self-centredness, rather than a free response of love.

Similarly, Miller's "language of relationships" may be helpful in pointing to God's grace as the hidden context of our daily actions. However, relationships--even of a high "quality"--do not do this by themselves. Being loved by parents or in a group doesn't by itself point to God's grace as the context of the many ambiguous and complex experiences of daily life, in which one may encounter a lot of tension or indifference or outright rejection. "The language of relationships" are not a direct access to God's grace. They are at best metaphors. That is, they must contain the two references which make parables work. They must refer, on the one hand, to the everyday reality of an individual (which includes the many role-relationships of vocational tasks) and, on the other, to God as a source of a "new logic." Human lives indeed can become major metaphors of God's reality when we begin to puzzle at the strange logic by which they act.

"Religious language" and its "oddness," which Miller has recognized as a major aid to Christian educators, does not automatically accomplish our educational aim. Religious language is only effective when the hearer can recognize his own daily reality in it and when he notices that his own basic perspective of life is being challenged.

Once we recognize the function we perform in helping people to "hear" the demand to serve their neighbors, which is present in their own lives, and to "see" the demand as the address of a gracious God, we will keep on discovering new means for carrying out our tasks. For example, in addition to "social experiments" we can use the way we "order" a learning environment, the way we "name" the details of life, the "telling" of stories which reflect the social dynamics of life, as means for enabling learners to notice the details and relational tasks of their own lives. And for showing everyday life as seen from the perspective of faith in a gracious God, we have primarily the various biblical modes of representing reality: its stories, parables, poems and accounts of Jesus as the human metaphor of God. Beyond biblical stories, we have the re-enactment of the reversal of perspectives from sin to faith in Christian liturgies. Corporate worship on a special day can provide the context for the rest of the week. We have the resources of autobiographies in which Christian lives again become metaphors of God's presence in the ambiguities of living. And as Sallie McFague, in following Erich Auerbach, has shown, we have the Western literary tradition, which is haunted by the story of Jesus, at our disposal for wrestling with a faith perspective.[5]

The process of grace. The range of educational resources for pointing learners to "Creation" and "the Promise" as God's gracious means for entering into dialogue with us is vast. However, before we put the "tools of our trade" to use, we must recall by what process grace creates faith. Our educational process must follow this movement.

Luther calls the movement of grace: killing for the sake of life. The human presumption to be able to know what is ultimately good for them by means of their human reason and faculties must be destroyed, so that the humble stance of faith can be born. The Fall, according to Luther, is from believing to knowing. The movement of grace reverses this "Fall" by ending direct knowledge of God's will so that trust in God can be the guide to action. This movement is the "dialectic of grace." The means for bringing about the dialectical process, Luther calls "Law and Gospel." The natural law which is written into daily social reality must be used "spiritually" to destroy a person's presumption that he is righteous before God, others or himself, simply because he has acted according to his own (or his church's) ethical norm. There is a greater demand, the call to love your neighbor in all your vocations, which cannot be fulfilled by an external morality or legality. Love requires an inward freedom to be responsive and involved. It requires the absence of self-preoccupation. The Word of Promise, which is not written into any human reason or understanding, must also be used "spiritually" to help those who have lost confidence in their former world-view to create a new perspective on life. It must be a perspective in which human worth and meaning is a gift of God and not based on human achievement of certain norms.

We know today that parables work by the same dialectic of grace. The strange twists and breaks in their portrayal of ordinary reality attempt to tear apart the hearer's familiar view of life. Only when the conventional, egocentric view is exposed as an arbitrary view, can the parable offer a new perspective.

What clues do the insights of Luther and of contemporary biblical scholars into the dialectic of grace give to Christian educators? What educational process can reflect the dialectical movement of grace? An understanding how grace creates faith readily shows us those elements in the educational processes of Coe and Miller which we must retain. It also shows us where we must go beyond both, if we want to help individuals to practice a daily reversal of perspectives. Our educational focus must be on affecting "perspectives on life" and thereby influence a person's way of responding to life. One's perspective is incarnate in one's actions. As we now trace a bare outline of the educational dynamics that reflect the dynamics of grace, we will modify Miller's distinction between processes of Christian nurture and processes of Christian instruction or insight to indicate the relationship between an incarnate faith and one's basic perspective on life. Our primary two tasks will be (i) nurturing a faith view and (ii) reversing perspectives.

b. The educational dynamics

i. Nurturing a faith view of daily life

Human metaphors. Faith, as we heard, is a life-long process of coming to belief. How does this process begin in children or in non-believing adults? Miller follows Horace Bushnell in emphasizing the seminal role of Christian nurture. According to Miller, human lives are the mediations of God to the child. They mediate God's creative activity in the birth of a child. They mediate God's covenant of law by giving the child a dependable order to grow up in. They mediate God's act of recreation by restoring broken relationships with their child through forgiveness.

There are some definite weaknesses in Miller's notion of Christian nurture. First of all, he identifies the various "mighty acts" of the drama of redemption with various types of human relationships as the mediation of God's changing relationships to humans. The "spiritual" dynamics of divine-human dialogue are translated into interpersonal dynamics--and somewhat arbitrarily at that. That the drama of redemption liberates people from an egocentric grounding of the spirit to make a theocentric grounding possible does not become clear. Nor is it apparent how the human relationships address a child's "spiritual," i.e., basic way, of finding meaning and worth in life. Secondly, Miller does not clarify how directly or indirectly God is present in the human mediations of his "mighty acts." It often sounds as if God can be almost glimpsed just beneath the surface of these human relationships of love and forgiveness.

Our understanding that God is present always in "clothed" form and that faith is always incarnate allows us to affirm Miller's basic contention that lived human lives are central elements in nurturing the process of coming to belief. However, we must now emphasize that the lives of believers are not a direct access to God. We cannot observe God beneath the surface. Rather human lives are at best a metaphor of God in which the familiar and the strange are inextricably woven together. Luther, who does not speak of lives as metaphors, nevertheless has stressed that there are no specific, identifiable outward actions that distinguish the Christian from any other morally upright citizen. The distinctiveness of the Christian life lies in his "inwardness," i.e., his inner and hidden way of approaching a task. This "inwardness" is faith. Faith is his teacher in respect to what works are done and how they are done. Faith in God gives the believer a way of seeing, and responding to, situations which is marked by freedom from self-preoccupation and freedom for others. There is no specific set of outward actions which proves that this freedom, this faith-view of life, is present. The outward, observable actions can however be witnesses or pointers to the fact that this person must be operating according to some "strange logic," namely, the logic of grace.

Once we acknowledge that all our encounters with God are indirect by occurring within the realm of creation, then we are not tempted to downplay the importance of human lives which embody a faith-view simply because these lives are "only" metaphors. Recognizing the metaphorical nature of Christian lives--the tension and unity between outward action and the inward source of action--helps us to avoid idolizing any particular set of actions or any particular set of customs, traditions, or patterns of home and congregational life. We do not want children and others to imitate our outward actions, which for them become simply a new (possibly "religious" or "churchly") convention. We want them to live out of the same "spirit," the same perspective of faith. After all, we must remember that we as Christian educators--as parents, friends, fellow members of a congregation, ministers--are ourselves no finished products. We are in the process of coming to belief within the complexities and vagaries of ordinary life.

The human metaphors are vital witnesses to the hidden context of unmerited love and worth. They become one important means for allowing a faith-view of life become a possibility for others. What communicates to others is not so much the "quality" of their lives as reflected in their loving relationships (as Miller seems to imply). Rather it is their reliance on God's grace. They are not some "ideal people," but very real and often failing people. They are people who are willing to acknowledge their failures in life's vocations, since success is not the measure of their worth. They are willing to reverse their opinions and ideas, because they do not worship their own thoughts. It is in their strange way of responding to their very ordinariness that they point to the context of grace. Such "broken models" are very liberating to children and others. The child is much less likely to internalize some image of "the ideal parent" as God's will and be tormented for large stretches of his life by the accusations of this internalized ideal in his conscience.

"Christian educators" do not only shape the view of life that others will develop by means of their "broken modeling" as human metaphors. They influence an individual's perspective and help it to develop by "ordering," "naming," and "telling."

Ordering. A person's perspective on life is influenced by how his life is "ordered" or structured or framed. The educator's task of "ordering" the life of his charges is like that of an artist who has to delimit or frame his picture. What elements should be central to my picture? What elements will be screened out, if I set my perimeters here? The artist orders the impressions he receives from his subject within the frame he sets. Without such ordering or framing, there would be no distinctive perspective and no identifiable artist. Life with its multiple impressions, events, tasks and people would be chaotic, and even frightening to a child unless it was ordered and framed from some perspective. The finished picture, the actual arrangement of activities and impressions, are not "spiritual" in themselves. What counts is again the perspective from which one keeps on attempting to direct the attention of one's charges toward actual created life and its natural and social dynamics. The educator must keep on asking himself--whether at home, school, playyard or church--, If I believe that God is the Creator, what details, dynamics, and responsibilities do I want my charges to notice and pay particular attention to? What arrangement of space or what use of time or what expectations will accomplish this? What arrangements screen out such things as an open view of people of other backgrounds and races and creeds (such as stereotypical portrayals)?

Coe has made a good start in noticing how important the ordering of a child's social world is. The child must be given opportunities for noticing the many different types of groups and relationships he is in, such as, groups of friends, neighborhoods, a given culture, citizen of a particular nation, member of the human race. Coe has also begun to explore, how the child can learn to order his own social world to express the values he has come to acknowledge as important to him. Similarly, we must give our charges opportunity to not only experience our ordering, but also to give order to parts of their lives according to their developing perspective. In contrast to Coe, we must hold that there is no final or ideal ordering of social life that could be called divine or spiritual in itself. Our and the child's ordering are witnesses to the hidden context within which we are beginning to learn to look at life and its dynamics.

Naming. Our faith-view of life must also express itself in how we name or call the details, dynamics and demands in it. Luther has alerted us to the distinctive language-systems or terminologies that the varying professional perspectives develop, such as those of natural scientists in contrast to those of theologians. A theological view of life must find words to represent daily realities in such a way that they point to the communication-network that exists between human creatures, created realities and the Creator. Without being able to develop a theory of language within the scope of this section, we must nevertheless become aware of the power of words in shaping a person's perception of life. If we believe that God "addresses" us through the details of created life, we must attempt to overcome the objectifying language which lets us look at life as a collection of "objects" which we, "the subjects," observe. Because of the social dynamics of life and the natural law of love that seeks to guide them, we must search for language which relates us and our actions to the people we influence. We must seek to overcome the impersonal or depersonalizing language that is particularly noticeable in many of our news media these days. Because of the hidden nature of God, we must fend off literalistic religious language and seek for metaphorical representations. We must begin to appropriate educationally the study into the relationship of language to our perception of reality that has gone on in philosophy, psychology, and the New Hermeneutic school of theology--to name only a few.[6]

Telling. A lot of attention has been given recently to the "telling" of the "Christian story" as a means of enabling people to look at life with the eyes of faith.[7] From our understanding of indirect communication, we can see that a "Christian" story is not identifiable by a specific content or some religious jargon. A story becomes "Christian" when it portrays life from the perspective of faith. The perspective cannot be grasped directly. It shows itself in how the affairs of humans, nature, and the Providence which guides these are ordered to one another. It shows itself in its description of human life as a process of becoming, a process of transformations through the decisions and actions in time.[8] The educator's responsibility will be to expose his charges to stories ordered by faith's perspective on life. He must also help the reader or hearer to climb onto the author's shoulders so that he can try to look at life the way the author does. The reader must be led to wrestle with the perspective of the story rather than being allowed to be preoccupied with the particular plot and individual incidences. The author's story thus becomes a witness to the hidden context of a gracious God which has guided his way of seeing life.

Thus we see that whether we use "human lives," "ordering," "naming," or "telling," we are always in the realm of indirect communication when we want to help others develop a faith perspective on life. All of these means of nurture are, at best, metaphors in which the ordinary elements of life are ordered in such a way that they point to the hidden context of God's Promise of grace.

ii. Reversing perspectives

By a variety of living, structural and verbal metaphors of daily life as God's address, the process of coming to believe is being nurtured.

Beyond being confronted with embodied forms of a faith-view of life, people must be equipped for daily reversals of perspectives. Without these reversals the human lives become ideals to be imitated; the "order" or arrangement of life's activities becomes a new convention which can be fulfilled "externally" without the inwardness of faith; the Christian "naming" of the world becomes a new literal, one-dimensional definition which forces living dynamics into a procrustean bed; and the Christian stories lose their existential power of changing our ways of seeing and doing.

Beyond the educational processes of nurture, Miller proposes that we need processes of Christian insight. Coe speaks of Christian instruction. In both cases they are referring to the need for reflection upon actions and experiences, if learning is to occur. The open question remains, What is the purpose of the reflection upon experience? For Coe it is the way to be able to discover the better or more real values that should guide our actions. For Miller the processes of Christian insight either lead to theological concepts and beliefs as the precursor to faith as commitment. Or they lead to a discernment of God in the world which is closely linked to commitment. When I propose that the phase of Christian instruction focus on bringing about a dialogue of perspectives so that the participants can learn the dynamics of daily reversals of views, I am basing myself on the dialectic of grace, rather than on some epistemology of how we come to know divine ideals, concepts, or realities. The dialectic of grace alone confronts the phenomenon of human sin head on.

In the educational process of "reversing perspectives," we remain just as grounded in the activities and empirical realities of daily life as Coe and Miller suggest we do. The basic movement of this educational element is still "action--reflection--action" or "from the world--to the

Church--to the world." However, the task of "reflection" is changed to attending to ways of seeing life from uncovering valid knowledge (e.g., about social ideals). Rather than using "reflection" to move from the complex and changing realm of living to the less dynamic realm of ideas and concepts, we propose to use it to keep actual realities in view all the time. The primary role of "the Church" toward those who come to it from the challenges and tasks of "the world" and return to it, is not to teach them a "relevant theology," nor to enable people to observe or verify the existence of an entity called "God." Rather it is to undermine the familiar, egocentric context for looking at the experiences in the world and to provide a new context, the context of unmerited love and worth. The role of the Church is to liberate people from the narrow perspectives which sin creates, so that more of their actual world can come into view. The phase of "reflection" or of "the Church" thus deals with a dialogue or conflict of interpretations of life and of our way of responding to it.

How does one bring about a conflict of interpretations so that a person discovers the possibility of reversing his basic perspective on life? As we recently noted in reviewing "the means of grace," our major resources as educators are created reality itself and God's Promise of grace and forgiveness. Luther has shown us the "spiritual use" we must make of these resources to bring about the possibility of a reversal.[9] We can gain further clues on how a dialogue of perspectives comes about from contemporary hermeneutic philosophy and theology.[10] For Christian educators, Thomas H. Groome has begun to reflect on how one brings about a dialogue between "our story" and "the Christian story" in such a way that a changed "praxis" or way of acting comes about.[11] To relate educational insights to the theological baseboard of this dissertation, I will base my comments primarily on Luther's work.

1) Representations of daily reality begin to surface the participants' narrow perspectives. What Luther calls the spiritual use of the Law is the task of confronting people with the natural law of service to one's neighbors. This "law" is a central dynamic of life within multiple role-relationships. The aim of presenting and representing the social dynamics of life to the participants of the dialogue of perspectives is not to call them to a certain type of action, but to allow them to experience the narrowness of their basic way of looking at life. They must experience that they are screening out many of the "calls to service" which are present in their own lives. They must become aware of the fact that they are looking at life from a perspective which is constantly threatened by the actual dynamics of life.

More specifically the aim of holding up those demands of social living which the participants tend to screen out is to help them become aware of the egocentric nature of their ways of looking at life. They must be helped to notice that they are trying to make life "good on their own terms." They are imposing their standards on life and on themselves. Where their own ideas of life are the context from which they approach life, they must screen out the multiple calls to love and service, because their sense of self-worth is dependent on living up to their ideas or ideal standards. They are living by a "logic of works" and not by the strange "logic of grace."

There are many techniques and methods educators can devise to allow the natural law of social living to challenge an individual's narrow way of looking at social life. The techniques to be effective must have some basic common elements. Whether the tehcnique is a simulation game, the sharing of "our stories," or telling biblical stories, the participants must be able to recognize that we are dealing with the actual dynamics of their own life. Further, the participants will only notice the narrowness of their view, if they are confronted with alternate ways of looking at the same reality. This "alternate perspective" can be present in other members of the group, or in the "leader" who may be leading a discussion or in various "Christian" stories. The "alternate perspective" is the agent for holding up those details of life which one or the other participant screens out or interprets egocentrically. The basic "structure" of the educational techniques therefore will be triadic: at least two perspectives come into dialogue over some common task or dynamic of daily life.

2) The educator must be ready to expose rationalizations for the egocentric perspectives. The Christian educator must be aware that a person cannot act without some meaning-system. Thus when one meaning-system is being exposed as faulty or too narrow, a person will either try to rationalize his past actions or try to substitute one egocentric system with another. Unless a person dares to look at life from the context of grace, he has no other choice but to keep on making life "good on his own terms," even if it means that he must change these "terms." The Christian educator must expect that participants will send out "smoke screens" to hide their own vulnerability whenever the dialogue of perspectives "gets through to them." The educator's task is not to publicly or directly tell someone that they are throwing up a smoke screen. This would only lead to further defenses. Rather the educator must "poetize" the situation. That is, he must be able to tell stories of others who tried to find fictitious reasons for their actions, knowing the reasons to be fictitious. Only when the participant realizes by himself what he is doing and his own reasons for

it, can he let go of these defenses.

3) The educator must utilize the promise of grace throughout the dialogue to enable people to let go of their narrow perspective and to construct a new one. While "creation" or the natural moral law is the major resource for surfacing and challenging the perspective of sin, the promise of God's grace is the major resource for helping people let go of this perspective. They cannot let go, unless they can see life from a new perspective. The possibility of looking at one's own worth not in the light of one's achievements but in the light of grace is the necessary condition for a "confession of sin." One can only admit one's own escape from love and responsibility, when one can find a source of self-worth which is not negated by sin and failure.

Because the promise of grace is thus the condition for any reversal of perspectives to occur, the educator must seek ways to express that grace is the context for the whole dialogue of perspectives. The leaders, and hopefully other participants in a dialogue of perspectives, must be human metaphors of grace, if someone is going to allow a reversal of his basic loyalties to occur. Christian stories and the offer of God's forgiveness are other "means of grace." The leader must help the participants notice the hidden context which allows people in Christian stories to act in a new way. He must also focus attention on Christian stories as describing a process of coming to belief, rather than showing magical and instant changes. As Luther has shown, the key element which frees people to let go of one perspective and accept the new one of grace is the promise that God's grace is "for me." God's promise of forgiveness must be personalized. It must be addressed to the anxious spirit of individuals. Otherwise people will grant that God could accept others--in spite of their errors and faults--but not them--because of the mess they have made of their whole lives.

4) The Christian educator must dare people to live by the strange logic of grace. A new way of responding to the relational tasks of daily life, and not the confession of sin, is the final aim of the dialogue of perspectives. A person cannot construct the perspective of grace in his mind or feelings. Only as he acts "as if" God is gracious to him, can he learn to see life in the context of grace. Only as he trusts the promise by obeying the imperative to serve others is he involved in the process of becoming human, of becoming a believer. The educator cannot prescribe a new set of actions that would truly express a faith-view of life. That would be to fall back into direct communication at the very end. But the educator can and must challenge each individual to respond to the call to serve in the many roles of their individual lives. He must challenge them to "re-order" their own "social world," to use Coe's language. The educator thus expresses that faith is always an incarnate reality, embodied in the great and trivial tasks of daily life.

5) The Christian educator must teach his charges how to make use of the "means of grace" for daily reversals. Neither the nurture of a faith perspective nor going through a dialogue of perspectives occasionally is enough, if a person's whole life is to be a process of coming to belief. Every person is confronted from the outside and inside with the temptation to use the more prevalent and seemingly more secure interpretation of self-centredness when facing real challenges. Simply repeating yesterdays action, which grew out of the inwardness of faith, today, can be a fall into sin, because I can seek to establish a personal continuity by my actions, rather than being responsive to the task at hand. How easy it is for me to fall

in love with my own conclusions and ideas--and thereby to cease listening to God's address in the actualities of life! Daily reversals from the view of sin to that of faith is necessary, if I am going to continue to respond to daily life as God's address.

Coe had suggested that since the mind habitually traps itself in its own thoughts, it must learn to habitually release itself. We now realize that this is impossible. We must be liberated from the view of sin. But we can learn to use the means of grace by ourselves, so that an ongoing liberation can occur. It is the means of grace: creation and promise which can break into our egocentricities and open us to a life of dialogue.

The role of the educator is to help people not only to go through one initial reversal of perspectives, but to understand the basic process by which reversals occur. When an individual understands how representations of the social dynamics of life confront our tendency toward narrow views and how the new context of grace allows us to admit failure and face new responsibilities, he will be able to turn to the means of grace on his own. The educator helps him to realize that such traditional acts of devotion as reading biblical stories or praying are not "works" to be performed. They are ways by which God's grace can liberate him. The stories provide him with an "alternate perspective" on life which invites him to revise his own. Prayer makes him conscious that his life occurs in the presence of a hidden, uncontrollable, but gracious God.

Beyond reflecting on "the Word" (as "Law" and "Promise") privately, the individual will always be dependent on the word of promise "from the mouth of his brethren," as Luther puts it. The promise of grace is more powerful when someone else says it "to me," than when I try to tell myself that God's unmerited love applies to me as well. The individual always remains a part of a Christian community, if he desires to keep on "coming to belief" by ongoing reversals. Christian education thus occurs in the context of Christian community. And Christian community exists because of the promise of grace which becomes flesh in this world.

NOTES

Introduction

[1] Sallie McFague TeSelle, Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 78.

[2] See ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 79. [4] Ibid.

Introduction to Part I

[1] Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther, Gestalt und Wirkungen: Gesammelte Aufsaetze, Schriften des Vereins fuer Reformationsgeschichte, no. 188 (Guetersloh: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1975), p. 187, translation mine.

[2] See Karin Bornkamm, Luthers Auslegungen des Galaterbriefs von 1519 und 1531, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, no. 35 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1963), pp. 176-180.

[3] Martin Luther, Luther's Works, gen. eds. J. Pelikan and H. Lehman, 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955-), 27:61. Luther's Works will be abbreviated as LW.

[4] "A monk does not concede that the works which a layman performs in his calling are as good and acceptable to God as his own" (ibid.).

[5] So Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation, trans. Carl Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 4.

[6] See below I,A,3,c.

[7] Gerhard Ebeling, Wort und Glaube (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1960), p. 68, translation mine.

[8] A brief summary of the debate on the reliability of Lectures on Genesis as a source to the genuine thought of Luther is found in David Loefgren, Die Theologie der Schoepfung bei Luther, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, no. 10 (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 12-14. I follow his recommendation of the use of Lectures on Genesis with the two precautions mentioned in the text. Loefgren (p. 14) shows that the precedence for using these lectures as a major source of Luther's thought has been well established in more recent Luther scholarship.

Chapter I

[1] LW 1:47. [2] Ibid., p. 124.

[3] See ibid., n. 59 which cites the definition of material and formal causes from Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V, 2.

[4] LW 1:41. Cf. ibid., p. 47. [5] LW 22:28-29.

[6] See LW 1:124 where Luther charges that an Aristotelean view of the creation of man would make the materials of creation eternal.

[7] "Only as a comprehensive world-view is the philosophical explanation [of existence] not acceptable to Luther" (Loefgren, p. 43, my trans.). It should be noted that the "philosophy" Luther is referring to in the first three chapters of his *Lectures on Genesis* is close to what we would consider the approach of the natural sciences or of empirical positivism. The statement of Loefgren should therefore not be applied to any philosophical world-view too quickly.

[8] LW 1:125. [9] Loefgren, p. 24, my trans. [10] LW 1:47.

[11] LW 1:22. [12] LW 26:95, italics mine. [13] LW 1:41.

[14] See LW 26:95-97.

[15] See Kjell Nilsson, *Simul: Das Miteinander von Goettlichem und Menschlichem in Luthers Theologie*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, no. 13 (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), p. 35.

[16] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. E. Bethge (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955; paperback ed., 1965), p. 195.

[17] A brief summary of this Christian anthropology is given in Loefgren, pp. 68-71. We will develop this anthropology below in I,A,2.

In distinguishing "natural" endowments as "form and matter" from the "spiritual" endowments of one's god-relationship, we are following the language of the *Lectures on Galatians* (LW 26:174). In *Lectures on Genesis* (LW 1:165-167), Luther uses "natural endowment" to refer also to the "spiritual" dimensions of man in order to indicate that they belong to the original or authentic human nature. The "spiritual endowments" are not merely an adornment or an added gift.

[18] A fuller treatment of changing the grounding of the spirit is given in chapter 3. Søren Kierkegaard has submitted the dynamics of a change in the grounding of the spirit to closest scrutiny in *The Sickness unto Death*, trans. by W. Lowrie (New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1955). He shows how the different groundings of the spirit shapes a person's way of viewing and responding to life. Kierkegaard thus gives Luther's insights a firm psychological base.

[19] See LW 22:26. [20] Loefgren, p. 31.

[21] The role of time in the process of communication between God and humans will be further developed below in I,A,3,a.

[22] Nilsson, p. 36. [23] LW 1:11.

[24] "All that exists is either the Creator Himself or His creation, either God or creature" (LW 22:14). Cf. Martin Luther, Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, vol. 10, I, 1 (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-): 186; hereafter cited as WA with the traditional German punctuation.

[25] LW 37:60. [26] LW 1:11. [27] See ibid., p. 15.

[28] See LW 26:95; cf. 1:11. [29] See LW 1:17-18.

[30] See ibid., p. 22.

[31] See ibid., pp. 11-15 on Luther's notion that "revelation" or intentional divine communications are "created coverings" of God. Luther lists baptism, absolving of sin, preaching and teaching, and the incarnation of Christ all as "coverings" or "created works" of God. We will unfold this notion below in I,B.

[32] LW 1:15.

[33] "Now the whole creation is a face or mask of God" (LW 26:95). Cf. LW 1:11.

[34] See LW 1:47. [35] LW 37:61. [36] Ibid., p. 58.

[37] LW 1:15, italics mine. [38] Ibid., p. 22. [39] See LW 26:95.

[40] Ibid. [41] Ibid.

[42] See Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," in Concordia or Book of Concord, trans by F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), pp. 170-171; hereafter cited as "Large Catechism."

[43] See below in I,A,3 for an exposition of Luther's notion of changing social orders.

[44] Gustav Toernvall, Geistliches und Weltliches Regiment bei Luther, Forschungen zur Geschichte und Lehre des Protestantismus, no. 2 (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1947), p. 20, my trans.

[45] See H. Bornkamm, pp. 160-161.

[46] LW 1:19, italics mine. See ibid., pp. 17-18 for the equation of ex nihilo with "out of darkness."

[47] Loefgren, p. 43. [48] See LW 26:95.

[49] In LW 26:95 Luther always warns that we must have "the wisdom that distinguishes God from His mask." The created mask by itself is not the divine.

[50] Whenever Luther stresses the "real presence" of God, Christ, or God's will in creation and the sacraments, he underlines that "real" does not imply a demonstrable presence. God's will, power, or right hand is not present in a "crude visible manner" (LW 37:65). Ibid., p. 55, Luther says: "That I should show visibly with eyes and fingers that Christ's body is at the same time in heaven and at table, as the fanatics ask of us, of course I cannot do."

[51] LW 44:26. See Wingren, pp. 214-224 on the concept of "what the hour demands."

[52] Toernvall, p. 20, my trans.

[53] Toernvall (p. 27, n. 40) says that Luther does not distinguish between the idea or essence of the state and its concrete form. The thought-forms of idealism were alien to him. Luther frequently criticized the way people were fulfilling the created orders. However, he always contrasts between the "use" and "abuse" of stations and orders, not between ideal and actual.

[54] "That which makes creatures [die Kreatur] good are not its characteristics, but the will of God, which forms creations. . . ." (Loefgren, p. 47, my trans.).

[55] LW 44:34.

[56] LW 1:146. Note the hendiadys in the phrase: "urged on against the Word and the good will of God."

[57] LW 1:18; cf. WA 10,I,1,183-186. [58] See WA 10,I,1,212.

[59] See ibid., p. 216. Again we encounter Luther's refusal to use a Logos-christology.

[60] Wingren, p. 217. [61] Ibid. [62] Ibid., p. 5. [63] LW 26:95-97.

[64] LW 27:56-61. See Wingren, pp. 4-6. [65] See LW 27:61.

[66] See ibid. In this passage we also find that the difference in stations does not give one person a greater value than another. As Luther puts it, "No godly person believes that the position of a magistrate is better in the sight of God than that of a subject, for he knows that both are divine institutions and have a divine command behind them."

[67] Wingren, p. 5.

[68] See Wingren, p. 6. Cf. LW 26:96 and LW 27:61 in which Luther states that "before God"--i.e., in the matter of religion and conscience--social positions and distinctions fall away.

[69] See LW 26:272-273 which speaks of the incarnation of human faith in concrete works in terms that are parallel to those describing Christ's incarnation in the humanity of Jesus. I extrapolate from this that just as

faith in God is present always in incarnate form, so also faith in an idol or self-chosen idea will express itself in concrete actions.

[70] See LW 1:66 which speaks of God assigning man the role of dominion on earth by "express command" or "express verbal command." The Latin text uses the term *expresso mandato* (WA 42, 49) from which the English term "mandate" is derived. In German Luther often uses the term "Gebot" (commandment; command) to distinguish this address of God from "Gesetz" (both as legal law and as the theological law of the law and gospel dialectic). In God's mandate or commandments there is as yet no separation of God's Word into "theological law" and "gospel." Rather God's concrete mandate is--figuratively speaking--"both Law and Gospel" (LW 1:146). On the notion of God's Word beyond the dialectic of law and gospel see also Hans Joachim Iwand, *Nachgelassene Werke*, eds. H. Gollwitzer, W. Kreck, et. al., vol. 5: *Luthers Theologie*, ed. J. Haar (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1974), pp. 203-225. On the whole issue of "mandate" I am following Nilsson, pp. 36-78.

[71] Nilsson, p. 38, my trans. [72] Wingren, p. 118.

[73] LW 44: 26; cf. ibid., p. 34.

[74] Ibid., p. 34. See also Herbert Olsson, *Schoepfung, Vernunft und Gesetz in Luthers Theologie*, Studia Doctrina Christiana Upsaliensia, no. 10 (Uppsala: n.p., 1971), p. 137.

[75] Olsson, p. 140.

[76] Ibid., p. 398, italics mine. Cf. ibid., pp. 230 & 241.

[77] Olsson says that it is exactly the fact of man's rebellion against God which shows that man has a personal being, his own existence, and that his own will is something (see ibid., p. 398).

[78] See Gerhard Ebeling, *Lutherstudien*, vol. 1 (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1971), p. 284 where he speaks of Word and faith being decisive for the being (*Sein*) of man. Ebeling contrasts Luther's "Word-ontology" which describes man's being in terms of "*coram*-relations"(i.e., relationships of address-response or of "facing and being faced") to the "causal ontology" of the scholastic theology of his time (ibid., pp. 280-285).

While Luther does speak of man's response in trust or distrust (i.e., faith or sin) to God's Word as belonging to man's "essence" or "nature" (LW 1:166-167), he also emphasizes that the human response does not change "the parts of our body" (ibid., p. 167), or our "nature" in terms of "ontological structures" as we would say it today. Thus without negating any of Ebeling's insights, I would prefer to say that the nature of man's response to the Word does not change man's ontological structure, but it does change his whole way of interpreting, and responding to, uncontrollable existence. Man does indeed become a different "person" when his response of trust is changed to distrust.

To make this same point, one can say that a person's body and mind do not change because of sin. But man's spirit--the grounding of the self--changes. The ungraspable God is replaced with one's own ideas as the anchor for the spirit in its quest for meaning and self-worth.

[79] The distinction between external actions which are not characteristic in themselves and faith as the characteristic inner source of actions has been picked up and developed by Søren Kierkegaard. He has coined the phrase that there is no "decisive outward expression" for the life of faith (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. by David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941; paperback ed., 1968], p. 440).

[80] LW 26:376, italics mine. [81] Ibid. [82] Ibid.

[83] Luther uses many different images to stress that it is the *way* of doing rather than the specific deed which characterizes the religious person. In "Treatise on Good Works," Luther says that our daily works receive a "borrowed goodness" from being done in faith (LW 44:24). In the tracts on the Lord's Supper, Luther uses the image that one cannot define the "spiritual" in terms of specific objects or works. Rather: "'Spirit consists in the *use*, not in the *object*'" (LW 37:92, italics mine).

[84] LW 44:24.

[85] Ibid. Or again Luther says, "The fact of the matter is that I want very much to teach the real good works which spring from faith" (ibid.).

[86] See LW 27:57. [87] See Nilsson, p. 37. [88] See ibid.

[89] According to Ebeling's reading of Luther the distinctive being of man as creature is in his *coram*-relations, i.e., always being "faced" by God or fellow humans (see *Luther: Einfuehrung in sein Denken* [Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1964], pp. 220-229).

[90] See Nilsson, p. 45.

[91] See below I,A,3,c on the valid use and role of moral law.

[92] See Nilsson, pp. 42-50 on God's mandate in existence as "natural law." The terms "mandate," "natural law," as well as "command," "divine law," and "statute" refer to the same one will of God (see ibid., p. 43). That the "natural law" is fundamentally the commandment to love the neighbor is clearly expressed by Luther in LW 27:56.

[93] "Large Catechism," p. 181. [94] Ibid., p. 180.

[95] LW 22:95.

[96] To indicate that the "natural law" belongs to human existence, Luther can say that it is "written in the human heart" ("Large Catechism," p. 196; cf. LW 27:57). This image does not imply that man has any immediate or inward knowledge of God's will separated from the mediation of God's will in the social dynamics of human existence.

[97] See LW 26:95.

[98] Wingren (p. 7) stresses particularly those aspects of vocations

or roles which compel man to serve others and to fulfill God's purposes "regardless of personal quality" and regardless of one's awareness of God's will. However, Wingren does not balance this emphasis with Luther's other concern, namely, to underline that faith, not compulsion, is central to the proper "use" of one's roles. Our roles or vocations are always roles of responsibility.

The imbalance of Wingren's presentation shows itself in the following statement: "What is effected through these orders of society is not due to an inner transformation of the heart" (ibid., p. 6). This statement is at best ambiguous. If the "transformation of the heart" has no impact on "what is effected through these orders of society," then faith and ethics, faith and social existence are divorced from one another. This is clearly not Luther's intention, as Nilsson, op. cit., has made it his purpose to show.

[99] WA 15, 625 (quoted in Wingren, p. 6), italics mine.

[100] For a fuller treatment see below I,B.

[101] "Large Catechism," p. 180, italics mine.

[102] LW 27:56, italics mine. [103] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

[104] "Large Catechism," ibid. [105] Wingren, p. 5.

[106] "Every attempt to differentiate between the sphere of the home, where personal Christian love rules, and the sphere of office, where the more impersonal rules of vocation hold sway, immediately runs afoul of Luther's terminology" (Wingren, pp. 4-5).

[107] LW 27:58. [108] Ibid. [109] Wingren, p. 46. [110] LW 27:58.

[111] LW 44:27, italics mine.

[112] It has been well established that according to Luther human free activity is central in all man's doing in the earthly realm. See Loefgren, pp. 61-89 in his chapters "Dominus Mundi" and "Mandatum Dei"; cf. Nilsson, pp. 79-97, in his chapter "Dominium und cooperatio." One of Luther's major themes in "Treatise on Good Works" is that human "good works" are those which man does in the free activity that arises from faith.

[113] See LW 1:66-68, 95, 142. [114] LW 26:95.

[115] LW 44:74-76. [116] Ibid., p. 75, italics mine.

[117] See Nilsson, p. 81; cf. Loefgren, p. 80.

[118] LW 44:27. [119] Ibid., p. 35.

[120] So also Loefgren. He connects human responsibility with the concrete but hidden presence of God. He says, e.g., "Luther's disputation with Erasmus shows . . . that this hiddenness [viz., God's ungraspable but commanding presence in creation], not only withdraws God from rational attempts to grasp him, but also makes man into a person who is responsible before God" (Loefgren, p. 230, my trans.). Cf. ibid., pp. 226-230.

[121] LW 26:95. [122] "Large Catechism," p. 176. [123] LW 26:95.

[124] Ibid., p. 96. [125] LW 44:84.

[126] "But if, as often happens, the temporal power and authorities, or whatever they call themselves, would compel a subject to do something contrary to the command of God, or hinder him from doing what God commands, obedience ends and the obligation ceases" (LW 44:100).

[127] See Wingren, p. 89. These concepts will be developed below, chapter II.

[128] Wingren, ibid. He is paraphrasing Luther's statement in WA 40,III,211-213.

[129] See LW 44:35. What I have paraphrased as "self-centered living," Luther calls "the life of the flesh" according to the Pauline usage of "flesh" as egocentricity.

[130] Ibid. [131] Ibid. [132] See LW 26:275. [133] See ibid.

[134] LW 44:35, italics mine.

[135] See Loefgren, pp. 69-72, on Luther's notion of "heart" and "inner man." Loefgren distinguishes between a phenomenological use of the term "inner man" as the "heart" which always has a god (either God or idol) from a heilsgeschichtlich use of the term, which then always refers to a person in terms of the trust-relationship to God (see ibid., p. 70, n. 35).

H. Bornkamm in an essay entitled "Aeusserer und innerer Mensch bei Luther und den Spiritualisten" (Luther, Gestalt und Wirkungen, pp. 187-202) discusses Luther's notion of "inner" and "outer" man. He shows that Luther's use of the terms "inner" and "outer" is that of an artist of language, not of a logician. Thus Luther can even invert the meaning of the two terms in certain contexts (see ibid., p. 187).

I will use the term "inner man" phenomenologically to describe how man must put his trust in a god, which, if the trust is authentic, is the true God, and, if inauthentic, is an idol. I will also use "outer man" phenomenologically to describe man as body, soul and mind, which embed him in natural and social realities.

[136] See "Large Catechism," p. 169. [137] See ibid. [138] Ibid.

[139] See Loefgren, p. 71.

[140] How sin creates its own gods will be developed below, chapter II.

[141] "Large Catechism," p. 169.

[142] "But to cling to Him [viz., God] with the heart is nothing else than to trust in Him entirely" (ibid., p. 170, italics mine).

[143] LW 44:34; cf. 44:40, 44; "Large Catechism," pp. 169-171.

[144] LW 44:28. [145] "Large Catechism," p. 169.

[146] Nilsson, p. 41, my trans. [147] LW 27:58.

[148] See LW 26:4-8 on the contrast between the two "righteousnesses." Here, at the beginning of his Lectures on Galatians, Luther surfaces the issue of the two types of righteousnesses as a major theme of the whole epistle. The terminology "original righteousness" is used in LW 1:165.

[149] LW 44:27. [150] "Large Catechism," p. 191.

[151] See ibid., pp. 169-170. [152] Ibid., p. 169. [153] Ibid., p. 191.

[154] Ibid. [155] LW 1:153. [156] Iwand, p. 204, n. 157.

[157] Ibid., my trans.

[158] WA 10,I,1,216. All English citations in the text from WA 10, I,1 will be my translations. The "Kirchenpostille" is not available in any of the standard English editions.

[159] On the relationship between Word and Spirit according to Luther see H. Bornkamm, pp. 150-156.

[160] See LW 37:137. [161] See H. Bornkamm, pp. 157-158.

[162] LW 37:88. [163] Ibid., p. 89.

[164] H. Bornkamm, p. 167, my trans. Cf. LW 26:228 which says, ". . . the supreme form of worship is to hear the voice of God and to believe" (italics mine).

[165] LW 1:41.

[166] In LW 1:17 Luther states: ". . . this point should also be noted: that Paul regards the conversion of the wicked--something which is also brought about by the Word--as a new work of creation."

[167] LW 1:12-13. [168] See H. Bornkamm, p. 151. [169] LW 37:68.

[170] In LW 44:27-29, Luther describes three stages of the certainty of faith. First, one accepts existence in faith; then suffering and adversity; and finally, one clings to God's announced good intentions even when the conscience accuses us and shows us a wrathful God.

[171] LW 26:387. [172] See LW 1:13; cf. 1:11.

[173] Ibid., p. 13. We noted previously that God is "clothed" in creation to manifest or express himself. Here "clothing" in the Word is also God's means to "show," rather than hide himself--except from direct perception.

[174] In reference to Genesis 2:16, Luther comments: "Here we have

the establishment of the church before there was any government of home and of state . . ." (LW 1:103). On the whole concept of worldly and spiritual governments as orders of creation see Toernvall, pp. 16-38.

[175] LW 1:12. [176] Toernvall, p. 17. [177] LW 26:13.

[178] Ibid., p. 354. [179] See LW 1:146.

[180] The spiritual regiment is a "realm of listening," since, as we noted previously, for Luther faith comes from hearing the Word.

[181] LW 1:80. [182] LW 26:396. [183] See LW 37:64-65; cf. ibid., p. 69.

[184] See ibid., pp. 68-69. [185] H. Bornkamm, p. 158.

[186] See LW 26:129.

[187] "God directs and rules his Christendom through the Word" (Toernvall, p. 18). On the notion of "the realm of listening" see ibid., pp. 29-31; H. Bornkamm, pp. 167-168. Luther remarks that the explicit relationship between God and man is established by the fact that "God speaks with us through His Word and we, in turn, speak with Him through prayer and faith" (LW 1:81).

[188] "The sincere disciples of the Gospel have always been few in number" (LW 22:55).

[189] ". . . the Gospel does not demand rational decision and consensus, but a trans-rational (uebervernuenftigen) faith . . ." (WA 10, I,1, 218).

[190] H. Bornkamm, p. 165, my trans. [191] WA 10,I,1, ibid.

[192] LW 37:135-136. [193] See ibid. [194] Ibid.

[195] The role and nature of the sacraments will be described more fully when we deal with the "dialectic of grace" in chapter III below.

Chapter II

[1] LW 1:175. We will not discuss Luther's various comments on "original sin" except to note that nowhere may one interpret his comments to imply there is any other necessary "cause" of sin than the act of sinning itself. Luther affirms the centrality of human responsibility for one's actions and one's failure to act. Sin may not be considered to be an ontological structure of fallen man, according to Luther--except if one uses the term "ontology" as Ebeling does to indicate the grounding of the human spirit either in God or one's self. "Sin," according to Luther, belongs to man's nature or essence in the same way that "faith" or "original righteousness" belonged to it before "the Fall" (see LW 1:165-167).

[2] See above chapter I, n. 78. [3] See LW 1:154.

[4] See ibid., p. 162. [5] See ibid. [6] See ibid., p. 146.

[7] "The reason [for the corruption of human nature] is sin, through which Eve sinned against both tables of the Law and against God Himself and His Word; moreover she sins in this way that she casts aside the Word of God and offers her whole self to Satan as his pupil" (ibid., p. 162).

[8] LW 1:147, italics mine. [9] Ibid., p. 151.

[10] Ibid., p. 147, italics mine. [11] Ibid., p. 148.

[12] See ibid., p. 154. [13] Ibid., italics mine.

[14] "It was God's intention that this command should provide man with an opportunity for obedience and outward worship, and that this tree should be a sort of sign by which man would give evidence that he was obeying God. But by *getting a discussion under way* as to whether God had commanded this, or, whether, since God had created everything for the sake of man, this one tree had been created for the ruin of man" (LW 1:154, italics mine).

[15] "One can . . . commit the error---and a devlish temptation to do so exists constantly as Luther saw in many examples--to identify a certain temporal order with the will of God, or to see the mandate of God directly in a fixed, concrete law" (Nilsson, pp. 44-45, my trans.).

[16] LW 37:134. [17] LW 1:161, italics mine.

[18] The two types of views of existence which true and false faith have were described above in I,A,3,c.

[19] Once faith is lost, man shifts his trust to his works and thoughts, as the following quote shows: "Therefore when faith has been lost there follow unbelief and idolatry, which transfer the glory of God to *works*. Thus the Anabaptists, the Sacramentarians, and the papists are all idolaters--not because they worship stones and pieces of wood, but because they give up the Word and *worship their own thoughts*" (LW 1:149, italics mine). Cf. LW 26:396-400.

[20] "To all appearances God is honored, but in reality the self has been set up as an idol" (LW 44:32).

[21] LW 1:147.

[22] LW 26:397, italics mine. The thought progression of LW 26:396-401 is a key expression of Luther's thinking on the issue of the god-relationship of distrust or "sin."

[23] See "Large Catechism," p. 169. [24] LW 44:31. [25] Ibid.

[26] LW 26:396. [27] See "Large Catechism," pp. 169-170.

[28] Wingren, p. 102. [29] LW 26:400-401.

[30] "There is no middle ground between human working and the knowledge of Christ [i.e., faith or trusting in grace] . . ." (LW 26:396).

[31] "Thus a Christian man who lives in this [total] confidence toward God . . . can do all things . . . and does everything gladly and willingly, not that he may gather merits and good works, but because it is a pleasure for him to please God in doing these things. He simply serves God with no thought of reward. . . . On the other hand, he who is not at one with God, or is in a state of doubt, worries and starts looking about for ways and means to do enough to influence God with his many good works" (LW 44:27). Cf. ibid., pp. 30-31.

[32] This is the language of the Lectures on Galatians. See, e.g., LW 26:4-5.

[33] Wingren, p. 103. [34] LW 44:43. [35] Ibid., p. 32, italics mine.

[36] See LW 1:149. [37] LW 26:274. [38] LW 44:73. [39] LW 26:40.

[40] Ibid., p. 140.

[41] LW 44:72. On the distinction between our "own" works and "God's" works see ibid., pp. 72-79. What distinguishes the one from the other is the issue of "spiritual rest," i.e., whether one ascribes one's works to oneself and introduces them into one's god-relationship, or whether one "rests" from "working" in the spiritual realm (viz., in the realm of the "inner man" before God). "Resting" is synonymous with trusting, which, as we know, is very active in many good works in the social realm.

[42] LW 27:61. [43] Ibid., p. 397. [44] LW 44:86.

[45] See LW 27:57. [46] LW 44:27. [47] Ibid., p. 46. [48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p. 25. [50] See ibid., p. 24. [51] Ibid., p. 51.

[52] LW 1:163, italics mine. [53] See ibid. [54] Ibid., p. 160.

[55] Ibid., p. 163. [56] Ibid., p. 159.

[57] See LW 26:309-310; cf. ibid., p. 150; 1:163. "Presumption of righteousness" can also be called "self-confidence" or "smugness."

[58] LW 44:27-28, italics mine.

Chapter III

[1] See WA 10, I,1,207.

[2] In ibid., p. 206 Luther remarks that the cause of all idolatry and works-righteousness is "the stiff-necked, self-willed presumption and opinion of natural reason. . . ." Presumptuous reason does not want to acknowledge a "master," i.e., it wants to be autonomous. As a result, it

believes that it "knows enough" and "wants to find on its own what [sic] and how one ought to be pious and serve God." Christ's role is neither to bring or to destroy reason, but to "blind and dampen" "the false and self-willed presumption" so that he can replace this presumption with the light of grace and faith. See also ibid., p. 203.

[3] See LW 26:29, 39; cf. LW 1:11-13.

[4] ". . . when he [viz., man] wants to *measure* and to believe God apart from the Word, *with his own reason*, he does not have the truth about God in his heart and therefore cannot think or judge correctly about Him" (LW 26:238, italics mine).

[5] Ibid., p. 216. [6] Ibid., p. 229. [7] See WA 10,I,1,202.

[8] Ibid.

[9] The connection between the epistemological end to speculation and the soteriological end to works-righteousness is clearly traced in LW 26:29.

[10] WA 10,I,1,202.

[11] Sinful or innocent humans can possibly know on their own that a God exists. But this knowledge still leaves open the central question as to what the intentions of this God are toward man. Is he a God who must be appeased by works? Or is he a gracious God? It is this "particular knowledge" of God--i.e., of his intentions toward sinful man--which Christ brings (see LW 26:399-400).

[12] See LW 37:68-69. [13] LW 26:29. [14] See ibid.

[15] Ibid., p. 30. [16] Ibid. [17] See WA 10,I,1,228.

[18] In speaking about the reversal from trust in self to trust in God, Luther remarks: "This [new] birth occurs not from blood, nor out of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but from God" (Ibid., p. 235).

[19] Ibid., p. 228. [20] Ibid.

[21] "We have stated above how the light of grace fights with and blinds the [presumptuous] natural light of reason" (Ibid., p. 231).

[22] Ibid., pp. 231-232. [23] See ibid., pp. 232-233.

[24] See ibid., p. 233. [25] See ibid., pp. 233-234.

[26] See ibid., pp. 186-187; cf. H. Bornkamm, pp. 158-161.

[27] For a clear distinction between the "light of reason," which is also created by God, and "the light of grace," which is the present Christ, see WA 10,I,1,202-207.

[28] ". . . each word is a sign which signifies something. But here

[i.e., in calling Christ 'the Word of God'] that which is signified is naturally in the sign or in the word, which is not the case with other signs; therefore he [viz., God] correctly calls it an essential picture, or sign of his nature" (Ibid., p. 187).

[29] Ibid., p. 188. [30] See LW 26:328.

[31] ". . . for faith can only be in the heart; therefore this light [of grace] can only be present in faith" (WA 10,I,1,216).

[32] In LW 26:29 Luther consciously picks up on 1 Cor. 1:21, 24, which describes Christ as "stumgling-block" and "folly," so that he can fend off speculative reason.

[33] WA 10, I,1,212.

[34] On the problem of understanding Luther's notion of "the Word," see Gerhard Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung. Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Hermeneutik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), pp. 377-380.

[35] WA 10,I,1,218.

[36] So H. Bornkamm, p. 175; cf. ibid., pp. 159, 165, 174-175.

[37] In WA 10,I,1,225-226 Luther describes the event of Christ coming to the people who sit in darkness as "his preaching and shining." Luther wants to emphasize the dimension of personal address which is present in the event of Christ as God's communication to humans. The personal address also applies to people today. They are not disciples at second hand. Christ is present today where "preaching" addresses people personally.

[38] "For to forgive sins, to retain sins, to make alive, etc., are works of the Divine Majesty alone; nevertheless, the same works are given to human beings and are done through the Word which human beings teach" (LW 1:12). For Luther the "forgiveness of sins" is the epitomy of Christ's "work" and "merit" (see LW 37:192).

[39] LW 37:88. See above I,B. [40] LW 37:192, italics mine.

[41] Ibid., p. 193. [42] Ibid. [43] Loefgren, p. 169.

[44] Both Loefgren (pp. 169-174) and H. Bornkamm (pp. 157 ff.) trace the interrelationship of Word and sacrament as indicated in the text.

[45] So also Loefgren, p. 171; cf., p. 169. [46] LW 26:376.

[47] Ibid., p. 215, italics mine.

[48] Ibid., p. 376. On the relationship of Word and Spirit see H. Bornkamm, pp. 150-157.

[49] The spirit makes the process of communicating the Word effective.

However, H. Bornkamm correctly remarks: "The concept of the magical may not be applied to Luther's notion of [the effectiveness of] the Word nor even brought into association with it" (p. 171). Faith and freedom would be precluded, if the Holy Spirit were to turn the Word into some directly compelling force. Faith and freedom can only be created by indirection. The role of the Holy Spirit and of the "language of the Holy Spirit" is to inspire trust in the heart. That is, it creates a *faith*-relationship to God rather one of immediate feelings of God's presence (see LW 1:41, 47).

[50] WA 10,I,1,232.

[51] See LW 44:77. The same dialectic of killing for the sake of life is expressed, e.g., in LW 26:314, 324, 331, 345.

[52] See references in previous note.

[53] LW 26:313. Cf. ibid., p. 137: "'But the Law is good, righteous, and holy.' Very well! But when we are involved in a discussion of justification, there is no room for speaking about the Law."

[54] Ibid., p. 316. [55] Ibid., p. 314.

[56] Ibid., p. 315, italics mine. [57] Ibid., p. 340.

[58] In this sentence the first use of the term "Law" refers to the "preached" or "theological use of" the natural law, whereas the second reference means the misused "preached law" which has become an objective moral code to mediate God's will to man. The paradoxical language of this sentence is intended to copy Luther's own paradoxical use of the term "Law." See above II,B,1 on "works of the Law." See below II,B,2 on "preached Law."

[59] See above II,B,3. [60] LW 26:314; cf. ibid., pp. 309-310.

[61] Ibid., p. 309, italics mine. [62] See ibid., pp. 309-322.

[63] Martin Schloemann in *Natuerliches und Gepredigtes Gesetz bei Luther*, Theologische Bibliothek Toepfelmann, no. 4 (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Toepfelmann, 1961) has definitely established that the preached law communicates the natural law in such a way that the natural law can become the basis for a consciousness of sin.

However, Schloemann's dissertation is somewhat marred by too mechanical and narrow an understanding of "preached" law as referring to *verbal* communication of the natural law, such as in the actual preaching in a church. As a result of this narrow view, it does not become clear that it is primarily the spiritual *function*, not the communication method, which distinguishes "preached" or "theological" law from the natural law. Wherever the spiritual function of revealing sin to the inner man occurs, there is the "preached Law."

[64] The distinction between the "moral" and "spiritual" function of the natural law is *my* attempt at expressing the shift between the functions of the natural law for the man of faith and the man of sin. These two functions should not be identified with *Luther's* "two uses of the Law"

which both deal with the Law after sin. After the fact of sin, the "spiritual use" is, for Luther, the chief use of the Law. There is also the secondary, emergency use for establishing civil laws to restrain the wicked or developing a public morality. This emergency measure Luther calls "the civil use of the Law." The "two uses of the Law"--after sin--deal with sin inwardly (spiritually) and outwardly (civilly). Luther discusses these two uses in LW 26:308-310, 316, 336-337. The basic function of the natural law, namely, to be the moral imperative to serve one's neighbors remains throughout--over and above the "two uses" which are made of it in particular reference to human sin.

[65] See Schloemann, p. 98.

[66] See LW 26:311, 322-323. So also Schloemann, p. 97. Before the time of Moses, God Himself carried out the role of preaching the Law to sinners, e.g., to Adam in the garden after the Fall (see LW 1:173 ff).

[67] LW 26:311. [68] See ibid., p. 322. [69] Ibid., p. 323.

[70] Ibid., p. 324. [71] Ibid., p. 325. [72] Ibid., p. 311.

[73] See Schloemann, p. 100. [74] See ibid., p. 101.

[75] In Luther's anthropology the conscience has no "legal content." Rather it is always determined in its judgments by man's highest good, either an idea of the good (and its demands) or the grace of God. As a temporary phase, the natural law "rules in the conscience" (e.g., LW 1:164) in order to reveal man's escape from God and creation. After it has fulfilled this role, the conscience must be "dead toward the Law" and receptive only to Christ, i.e., the Word of grace (see, e.g., LW 26:349). See Schloemann, pp. 78-83, on the role of the conscience in man's experience of sin.

[76] LW 26:150. [77] See Ebeling, Luther, p. 229.

[78] See LW 26:323. [79] Wingren, p. 29.

[80] Ibid., p. 66, italics mine. [81] Ibid., p. 61.

[82] Luther reflects on this image of Paul's in LW 26:336-340; cf. LW 1:164, 172-173.

[83] "But this smugness [of Eve's after transgressing God's command] . is not lasting. As soon as the eyes of Eve are opened, she remembers the Law which she had previously forgotten and which commanded them not to eat from the forbidden tree" (LW 1:164).

[84] See LW 26:150. [85] Ibid., p. 338. [86] Ibid., p. 320.

[87] ". . . because the hope of the forgiveness of sins is not yet available, he [viz., Adam] feels and sees nothing except death itself because of his transgression of the command" (LW 1:177).

[88] Ibid., p. 178. [89] Ibid. [90] See ibid.

[91] "After this disobedience [against God's concrete command] follows later on the excuse and defense of sin; and after the defense, the accusation and condemnation of God. This is the last step of sin, to insult God and to charge Him with being the originator of sin. Unless hearts are given courage through trust in mercy, this nature cannot be urged on beyond this point if there are successive steps of sin" (LW 1:179).

[92] See ibid., p. 178. [93] Ibid., p. 175, italics mine.

[94] Ibid., p. 173. [95] Ibid., p. 174. [96] Ibid., p. 176.

[97] Ibid. [98] Ibid., p. 117. [99] Ibid., p. 178.

[100] Ibid. [101] Ibid., p. 177.

[102] Since Luther does not give a systematic exposition of the process of reversal, one can find statements of his which seem to assign the task of bringing about a confession of sin to the Law by itself. However, it is only to assist the hearers of his lectures, that Luther occasionally joins together "Law" with "killing the old self" and "Gospel" with "making alive." The actual spiritual and psychological process of reversal is more complex than this oversimplification shows. Luther shows the complexity of the process and the interweaving of "grace" and "Law" in bringing about a confession of sin in his lectures on Adam's reversal. Thus Luther is only speaking loosely when he says, "Therefore when the Law forces a man to acknowledge his evil . . . and to confess his sin sincerely, it has performed its function; its time has come to an end, and the time of grace has come. . ." (LW 26:329). Since Luther is giving pastoral counsel to disturbed consciences in this passage, its emphasis is on showing the outside limit of the Law's rule in the conscience. It can do no more than (help to) reveal sin.

[103] See above I,B,1. [104] See above I,B,2. [105] LW 26:339.

[106] See LW 1:181. [107] Ibid., p. 186; cf., p. 181.

[108] Ibid., p. 181.

[109] The idea of this new form of "justification" does not have to be developed any further here, since it is already the basis of authentic existence as we showed above in I,A,3. The only change in the original process of "justification" is that accepting oneself as being "justified by God" now includes an acceptance of oneself as sinner.

[110] LW 26:314. [111] Ibid. [112] Ibid., p. 315. [113] Ibid.

[114] See above, I,A,2,c. [115] LW 26:349. [116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., italics mine. [118] Ibid. [119] Ibid. [120] Ibid., p. 340.

[121] Ibid., p. 318; cf., p. 316. [122] Ibid., p. 233.

[123] See ibid., pp. 349-350. [124] LW 44:78.

[125] See LW 44:77-78; cf. LW 1:211-214.

Chapter IV

[1] George Albert Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 82.

[2] See ibid., pp. 76-80 on the resistance of educators to examine their model of Christian education, because of their belief that ultimately religion is "caught."

[3] Ibid., p. 82.

[4] See George Albert Coe, "The Philosophy of the Movement for Religious Education," *The American Journal of Theology* 8 (April 1904):226.

[5] Ibid. [6] Ibid., p. 227. [7] Ibid. [8] Ibid. [9] Ibid., p. 228.

[10] Ibid. [11] Ibid. [12] Ibid., p. 229. [13] Ibid.

[14] See ibid., p. 231. [15] Ibid. [16] Ibid., p. 230.

[17] Ibid., p. 232. [18] Ibid., p. 234, my emphasis.

[19] Ibid., p. 228. [20] See ibid., p. 238. [21] See ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 229.

[23] For Coe the terms "religious education" and "Christian education" can be used synonymously, since the development of religion is toward the regard for persons and toward the belief that a Valuer of persons is at the heart of the cosmos as it is found in Christianity. Those present-day religions or philosophies which regard the ground of the world to be impersonal--such as philosophical Brahmanism and Buddhism--are censured by Coe as "an arrest [of religious development] rather than anything that is typical of religion as such" (*The Psychology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916, p. 240).

[24] George Albert Coe, *A Social Theory of Religious Education* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 13.

[25] In *Psychology of Religion*, p. 67, Coe distinguishes the pre-human from the distinctively human way of regulating desires or preferences as follows: "The desires of lower animals become organized after a fashion. Rats and mice learn not to touch the tempting morsel that the trap displays. A frog that is making for shore stops . . . if a bass approaches. Here is a kind of regulation of desire. Men as well as other species are molded in this stern manner. But men [also] mold themselves."

[26] *Social Theory*, p. 13.

[27] "Philosophy of Religious Education," p. 238. Cf. Psychology of Religion, p. 31.

[28] Social Theory, p. 13. [29] Ibid.

[30] Psychology of Religion, p. 67. [31] See Social Theory, p. 18.

[32] Ibid., p. 16. [33] Ibid., p. 18. [34] See ibid., pp. 15-16.

[35] Ibid., p. 17. [36] Ibid., pp. 15-16. [37] Ibid., p. 16.

[38] Ibid., p. 18. [39] See ibid. [40] Ibid. [41] Ibid., p. 92.

[42] Ibid. [43] Ibid., p. 93.

[44] See ibid. The definition of God as the "Great Valuer of Persons" comes from George Albert Coe, What is Christian Education? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 296.

[45] Social Theory, p. 94. [46] Ibid.

[47] See ibid.; cf. "Philosophy of Religious Education," p. 227.

[48] In Psychology of Religion, p. 106, Coe says that the origin of the god-idea is "a spontaneous, underived conviction that what is most important for us is really important, that is, respected and provided for by the reality upon which we depend." The development of the god-idea moves toward the personal so that worship in divine beings "culminates in faith that at the heart of things, as at our hearts, there is regard for persons" (Ibid., p. 227).

[49] Social Theory, p. 95. [50] Ibid., p. 55, emphasis in original.

[51] See ibid., p. 56. [52] Ibid. [53] Ibid., p. 54.

[54] Ibid., p. 64.

[55] What is Christian Education?, p. 69. [56] Ibid., p. 68.

[57] See Psychology of Religion, pp. 66-68 for a brief summary of the development of the "desires" of the mind.

[58] See Social Theory, pp. 71-73. [59] Ibid., p. 64.

[60] Ibid., p. 72.

[61] See What is Christian Education?, pp. 46-59 for Coe's summary of his criticism of "transmissive education."

[62] Ibid., p. 55. [63] See ibid. [64] Ibid.

[65] Social Theory, p. 102. [66] Ibid., p. 98. [67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., p. 103. [69] Ibid., p. 80. [70] Ibid., p. 102.

[71] Ibid.   [72] Ibid., p. 81.   [73] Ibid.   [74] See ibid., pp. 105-106.

[75] See ibid., p. 105.   [76] Ibid., p. 81.   [77] Ibid.   [78] Ibid., p. 83.

[79] Ibid., p. 82.   [80] Ibid.

[81] See George Albert Coe, *Law and Freedom in the School* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 9 and pp. 83-85.

[82] See *Social Theory*, p. 102.   [83] See ibid., p. 102.

[84] See ibid., p. 82.   [85] See ibid., pp. 113-116.   [86] Ibid., p. 83.

[87] Ibid.   [88] See ibid., p. 73.   [89] See ibid., p. 83.

[90] See *What is Christian Education?*, p. 75.   [91] See ibid.

[92] Ibid., pp. 77-78.   [93] Ibid., p. 285.

[94] See Helen Archibald, "George Albert Coe: Theorist for Religious Education in the Twentieth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1975), pp. 169-170, where she notes: "Coe's books reveal how much his overriding concern was with the theory of religious education and not the praxis of teaching. Only scattered references to actual incidents or specific teaching techniques appear in his books. . . . Rather his books are uniformly prescriptive in character, not descriptive. Reading them one is placed in the paradoxical situation of being confronted by someone to whom ideas are everything yet who asserts the belief that practice is everything."

[95] See *Psychology of Religion*, p. 133; cf. George Albert Coe, "Virtue and the Virtues: A Study of Method in the Teaching of Morals," *Religious Education* 47 (March-April 1952):140, where he says, ". . . the only generally valid method [i.e., of teaching morals] consists in causing the child to define to himself his own purpose in situations that he actually experiences." He has to consider what he is really after and why.

[96] See *What is Christian Education?*, p. 96.   [97] Ibid., p. 97.

[98] See "Virtue and Virtues," p. 140; cf. *Social Theory*, p. 82.

[99] See "Virtue and Virtues," ibid.

[100] *What is Christian Education?*, p. 177.

[101] See *Psychology of Religion*, p. 133.

[102] "Virtue and Virtues," p. 141.

[103] *What is Christian Education?*, p. 177.

[104] See ibid., p. 166.   [105] Ibid., p. 185.

[106] Law and Freedom, p. vi. [107] Ibid.

[108] What is Christian Education?, p. 185. [109] Ibid., p. 187.

[110] Ibid., p. 188. [111] Ibid.

[112] Helen Archibald, op. cit., p. 252 remarks: ". . . Coe never completely eliminated a latent contradiction in his value theory. While he argues that all values were mutable, still he seemed in practice to argue that some values are changeless. For Coe, human personality in society is the normative value by which all other values are judged; and at many points his axiology was dependent upon an ontology which was not systematically explored."

[113] Law and Freedom, p. 60. [114] Ibid., p. 62.

[115] George Albert Coe, The Motives of Men (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 152.

[116] Ibid., p. 154. [117] See ibid., p. 155. [118] Ibid., p. 163.

[119] Ibid. [120] Ibid., p. 164. [121] See ibid., p. 166.

[122] Ibid., p. 169. [123] Ibid., p. 209. [124] See ibid.

[125] Ibid., pp. 185-186. [126] Ibid., p. 193, my emphasis.

[127] See ibid., p. 243. [128] Ibid. [129] Ibid., p. 243.

[130] Ibid., p. 246. [131] Law and Freedom, p. 76.

[132] Ibid., p. 31. [133] Ibid., p. 32. [134] Ibid. [135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., pp. 33-34. [137] Motives, p. 243. [138] Ibid., p. 250.

[139] See ibid., p. 209. [140] Ibid. [141] See Law and Freedom, p. 34.

[142] Motives, p. 240. [143] Ibid., pp. 250-251.

[144] Helen Archibald, op. cit., p. 252, reports Coe's statement that "Christianity was first offered to him as dogma wrapped in mysticism. His response was to see what, if anything, lay at the core once dogma and mysticism were stripped away. He believed he found that core in the capacity of Christianity to stimulate human wants or desires."

Chapter V

[1] Randolph Crump Miller, Education for Christian Living (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 8.

[2] Sara Little, The Role of the Bible in Contemporary Christian Education (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), p. 12, finds in this new focus the beginning of a "new movement" in Christian education.

[3] See Randolph Crump Miller, The Clue to Christian Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 8.

[4] Ibid., p. 9.

[5] See Randolph Crump Miller, This We Can Believe (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1976), pp. 39-51 for a summary of Miller's views on the presence of God.

[6] The Clue, p. 9. [7] Ibid., p. 8. [8] Ibid., p. 9.

[9] Randolph Crump Miller, Biblical Theology and Christian Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 34.

[10] Ibid., p. 9. [11] See The Clue, p. 8. [12] See ibid., p. 140.

[13] See ibid. [14] See ibid., p. 15. [15] Ibid., p. 5.

[16] Ibid. [17] Ibid. [18] Ibid., p. 8.

[19] "Christian Education as a Theological Discipline and Method," Religious Education (November-December 1953), p. 410.

[20] The Clue, p. 90. [21] See ibid., p. 90; cf. This We Believe, p. 46.

[22] See This We Believe, pp. 46-48. [23] The Clue, p. 107.

[24] Ibid. [25] This We Believe, p. 15. [26] Ibid., p. 16.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Miller likes to use the story of the Prodigal Son to illustrate our freedom to return to God. "He (i.e., the son) knew himself for what he was. And he said, 'I will arise and go to my father.' The son had the courage and freedom to decide and act." (This We Believe, p. 131.) Miller feels that he is following Jesus' view of grace and freedom rather than Paul's. Thus he can say (Ibid., p. 128), "The image of God in humanity is not nearly as badly defaced in Jesus' thought as in Paul's. God has endowed us with sufficient spiritual power to make our own decisions. We may still choose to live among swine and yet we have not lost the power to 'come to ourselves.'"

[29] See This We Believe, pp. 16 and 173. [30] The Clue, p. 142.

[31] Biblical Theology, p. 27.

[32] Randolph Crump Miller, "Christian Education in a Secular Society," Lutheran Education (September 1966), p. 4.

[33] See This We Believe, p. 134.

[34] See "Christian Education in a Secular Society," p. 4.

[35] Ibid., p. 3. [36] This We Believe, p. 162. [37] Ibid., p. 163.

[38] See *The Clue*, p. 141. [39] *This We Believe*, p. 163.

[40] Ibid., p. 173.

[41] See Randolph Crump Miller, "Continuity and Contrast in the Future of Religious Education," in *The Religious Education We Need*, ed. James Michael Lee (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1976), pp. 35-37.

[42] Ibid., p. 35. [43] Ibid. [44] Ibid., p. 37.

[45] See Randolph Crump Miller, "Human Relations and Christian Education," *World Christian Education* (First Quarter, 1954), p. 3. Cf. *The Clue*, p. 9.

[46] *The Clue*, p. 13.

[47] See *Biblical Theology*, pp. 16-31 for a clear summary of Miller's concept of the "drama of redemption."

[48] Ibid., p. 16. [49] Ibid., p. 27.

[50] "The point is clear that the newborn babe is within the drama of redemption from the moment of his conception. He is a creature of his Creator, and the acts of God as revealed in history are repeated in his relationships (such as those to his parents or nurse)" (Ibid., p. 29).

[51] Ibid., p. 10.

[52] Randolph Crump Miller, "Revelation, Relevance and Relationships," *Religion in Life* (Winter 1957-58), p. 140.

[53] *Biblical Theology*, p. 27.

[54] Randolph Crump Miller, *Christian Nurture and the Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 85. Miller accepts the concept of the "power of the personal" and its definition from Reuel Howe.

[55] See "Human Relations," p. 3.

[56] *Biblical Theology*, p. 8, emphasis in original.

[57] Ibid., p. 9. [58] See ibid., pp. 5-7. [59] Ibid., p. 6.

[60] Ibid., p. 5. [61] Ibid., pp. 5-6. [62] Ibid., p. 6.

[63] See ibid., p. 28. [64] *Biblical Theology*, p. 10.

[65] See *Christian Nurture*, p. 77.

[66] See *Biblical Theology*, p. 11. [67] *Christian Nurture*, p. 84.

[68] Ibid., p. 183. [69] See "Secular Society," p. 5.

[70] *Biblical Theology*, p. 10. [71] See *Christian Nurture*, p. 80.

[72] *Biblical Theology*, p. 9.

[73] Ibid., p. 41; cf. p. 63 and p. 95.

[74] Sara Little, "Randolph Crump Miller: Theologian-Educator," *Religious Education* (Special Edition, September-October 1978), pp. S-72--S-73.

[75] *The Clue*, p. 71. [76] See ibid., p. 14.

[77] See *Christian Nurture*, pp. 89-91. [78] *The Clue*, p. 105.

[79] Ibid., p. 28, my emphasis. [80] Ibid., p. 46.

[81] Ibid., p. 62, my emphasis. [82] Ibid., p. 5, my emphasis.

[83] Ibid., p. 105. [84] See ibid., p. 34. [85] Ibid., p. 4.

[86] See ibid., p. 47. [87] Ibid., p. 17.

[88] See Randolph Crump Miller, "Empiricism and Analogical Theology," *Christendom* (Summer 1940), pp. 402-403.

[89] See ibid., pp. 403-409 for a good summary of how one must move "beyond empiricism" without sacrificing the empirical basis of truth.

[90] Ibid., p. 403. [91] Ibid., ~~p.~~ 399. [92] Ibid.

[93] See ibid., pp. 400-402 for Miller's description of the close relationship between empiricism and revelation. Miller's notion of revelation as the coincidence of event and appreciation is derived from Archbishop Temple's thought.

[94] Ibid., p. 401. [95] Ibid., pp. 400-401. [96] Ibid., p. 402.

[97] In "Randolph Crump Miller," pp. S-73--S-74, Sara Little indicates how Miller's writings have anticipated much of the present concern for developmental and stage theory in religious and moral education. "What he has to say about acts in the drama of an individual's life, paralleling to some extent the biblical drama, anticipates stages of faith development, as in James Fowler. What he says about translating events into experiences appropriate for age groups reminds one of issues raised by Jean Piaget or Lawrence Kohlberg or John Westerhoff, and the wealth of material now being produced with reference to cognitive and moral development."

[98] *The Clue*, p. 47, my emphasis. [99] Ibid., p. 54.

[100] Ibid., p. 49. [101] Ibid. [102] Ibid., p. 54.

[103] Ibid., p. 47. [104] See ibid., pp. 55-70.

[105] Ibid., p. 55. [106] See ibid., pp. 63-64.

[107] Ibid., p. 62. [108] Ibid., p. 68. [109] See ibid., p. 69.

[110] Biblical Theology, p. vii. [111] Ibid., p. 15.

[112] See ibid., p. 27. [113] Ibid., p. 41. [114] See ibid., p. 6.

[115] Ibid., p. 41. [116] Ibid., pp. 30-31. [117] Ibid., p. 48.

[118] See ibid. [119] Ibid., p. 52.

[120] Randolph Crump Miller, "Linguistic Philosophy and Religious Education," Religious Education (July-August 1970), p. 310; cf. p. 317. We will refer to this article frequently in this section, since it presents Miller's own excerpts from his The Language Gap and God: Religious Language and Christian Education (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970).

[121] See for example This We Believe, p. 15. This book was written in 1976; and Miller's view on coming to "right beliefs" and the relation of "right beliefs" to faith as commitment has not changed decisively from those in The Clue written in 1950 (See The Clue, pp. 106-107).

[122] Christian Nurture, p. 47.

[123] Ibid., p. 59, italics in original. [124] Ibid. [125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid., p. 60. [127] Ibid. [128] Ibid., p. 61. [129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., p. 62, my emphasis. [131] Ibid., p. 63.

[132] Ibid., p. 88. [133] The Language Gap, p. 77.

[134] See "Linguistic Philosophy," p. 310.

[135] Christian Nurture, p. 89. [136] See ibid.

[137] See "Continuity and Contrast," p. 37.

[138] See "Linguistic Philosophy," p. 312. [139] See ibid., p. 313.

[140] Ibid. [141] Christian Nurture, p. 92.

[142] "Linguistic Philosophy," p. 315.

[143] Ibid., emphasis in original. [144] Ibid., p. 314.

[145] The Language Gap, p. 92. [146] Ibid., p. 107.

[147] "Linguistic Philosophy," p. 316. [148] See ibid., pp. 316-317.

[149] That the so-called "Christian experience" of the fellowship can become an ideal norm for judging the experiences of life is seen, for example, in The Clue, p. 14. Miller says, "The Church is always on the sidelines, making use of whatever experiences the home and school and community provide for a Christian interpretation of life. This means that the Church should often sit in judgment on the child's experiences which run in opposition to the basic assumptions of a Christian society."

[150] See This We Believe, pp. 128-130.

Chapter VI

[1] See the bibliographic references to chapter 3 of Sallie McFague's Speaking in Parables (pp. 88-89).

[2] Ibid., p. 86. [3] Ibid., p. 132.

[4] See ibid., pp. 66-77 for a treatment of the form and nature of parables.

[5] See ibid., pp. 87, 125-126.

[6] See William Dember, Psychology of Perception (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Wilson, Inc., 1966); Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962); Owen Barfield, Saving the Appearances (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., n.d.); Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974); Claude Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1966).

[7] For theological and philosophical reflections on "story" see McFague, pp. 35-38. Bibliographical clues can be found in her notes, pp. 41-42. A recent model of Christian education in which relating "the Christian story" to "our story" is central is that of Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education. Sharing our Story and Vision (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980).

[8] A more detailed phenomenology of "Christian" stories is given in McFague, chapter 6.

[9] See above III,B, "The Dialectic of Law and Gospel."

[10] Paul J. Achtemeier provides a good introduction to both philosophical and theological hermeneutics in his book An Introduction to the New Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969).

[11] See Thomas H. Groome, op. cit.

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